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To Boldly Go

How do women in senior positions in the Church of England construe their leadership?

Rees, Diane

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Author:Diane Rees

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**To Boldly Go:
How do women in senior positions in the
Church of England
construe their leadership?**

**Research Based Thesis
for the
Doctorate in Theology and Ministry**

**Diane Eluned Rees
June 2013**

CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements	5
Abstract	6
Preface	8
WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?	
What is leadership?	9
Women in the church	14
Chapter 1	19
A RESEARCH JOURNEY	
AN EXPLORATION OF HOW A GROUP OF WOMEN	
INCUMBENTS CONSTRUE THEIR MINISTRY (MFS)	
A Research Journey	20
Two key events: 1992 and 2012	21
The main questions	23
Two studies	26
An exploration of how a group of women	28
incumbents construe their ministry	
Key themes	28
Person, Process and Context	29
Now and Ideal	36
Rankings and Ratings	39
Conclusions from the MFS	42
Chapter 2	46
EMPIRICAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	
What does it mean to construe?	47
Rationale	49
Personal Construct Psychology in theory	51
Personal Construct Psychology in practice	55
Choosing Elements	56
Eliciting Constructs	57
Laddering	58
The Ministry Focused Study (MFS)	60
- Repertory Grid Questionnaire	60
The Research Based Thesis (RBT)	66
- Self Characterisation	67
- Repertory Grid Interview	71
Closing comments on methodology	75

Chapter 3	RESULTS	77
	Introduction	78
	Detailed Case Study: Ruth	80
	Summaries of each of the 14 Case Studies	94
	Collective data	105
	Summary of the case studies looked at as a group	105
	Helps and Hindrances	108
	The '3 roles' - Archdeacon, Dean, Theological Educator	111
	The experience of the person, process and context in leadership	116
	How the women experience the <i>person</i> in leadership	116
	How the women experience the <i>process</i> in leadership	119
	How the women experience the <i>context</i> in leadership	124
	Conclusions: Key themes and issues from the empirical research	129
Chapter 4	CONCLUSION	133
	Is Personal Construct Psychology a useful tool?	134
	The two studies	138
	An exploration of how a group of women incumbents construe their ministry	138
	How do women in senior positions in the Church of England construe their leadership?	140
	- The <i>Person</i> of the leader: Managing the Role Being 'yourself' as leader	140
	- The <i>Process</i> of leadership: Having Agency Being a 'relational' leader	143
	- The <i>Context</i> in which leadership is exercised: Engaging with the Structures Being a 'woman' leader	146
	Conclusions	150
	General Observations	150
	Three important questions	152
	- Can 'Servant Leadership' be a good model for women?	152
	- Can tradition be a resource for women?	153
	- Is simply having more women enough?	155
	To boldly go?	157

BIBLIOGRAPHY and REFERENCES	159
APPENDICES	
Appendix A	168
The 11 Corollaries in PCP	169
Appendix B	170
MFS Grid Questionnaires	171
Appendix C	184
Research Based Thesis (RBT)	
Initial letter to the women	185
Interview information gathering	
- Biographical information (blank)	186
- Helps and Hindrances sheet (blank)	187
- Elements and Triadic Elicitation	188
- Grid with Elements (blank)	189
Appendix D	190
Keren's results with full Grid Suite analysis	

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Abstract

This thesis contains the results of two empirical studies focusing on the ministry and leadership of women in the Church of England. Two key events, one in 1992 and the other in 2012, almost exactly twenty years apart, provide the framework and context in which these studies take place.

The thesis helps to explain why so few women apply for senior positions in the Church of England. The first study, explores how women incumbents in a diocese make sense of their particular roles and ministries. The focus is initially on women incumbents, as the senior leaders for the church emerge from this group. This Ministry Focused Study (MFS) begins not only to address the issue itself but also acts as a pilot study. The second and substantive Research Based Thesis (RBT) uses these insights to investigate the primary question of the thesis:

How do women in senior positions in the Church of England construe their leadership?

Fourteen women (out of 15) who were in some of the most senior positions in the Church of England - Cathedral Deans, Archdeacons and Theological College Principals - took part in the research project.

The central argument is that effective leadership for these women consists of three core dimensions:

The *Person* of the leader - this includes the connections between person and role, especially being able to 'be yourself' as a leader, as well as managing the role in the public and private spheres.

The *Process* of leadership - summarised as 'agency enhanced by communion'. The emphasis here is having the ability to bring about change and make things happen; fundamental to this is being a relational leader who seeks to develop interactions based on integrity and trust.

The *Context* in which leadership takes place - involves a deep understanding and engagement with the structures of the church, within which the leadership role is experienced and exercised.

Both studies employ a method of interviewing called Repertory Grids, which derive from a theory of personality proposed by George Kelly known as *Personal Construct Psychology*

(PCP). From the standpoint of those who are interviewed, it enables the discovery of some of the key issues and perspectives, as well as giving insight into both the relative importance of those issues and how those key perspectives interact with each other. PCP has proved useful in a variety of contexts, including education, social science (Cohen et al., 2000) and business research (Stewart and Stewart, 1980); being used with individuals, groups or organisations to explore a range of issues from beliefs, feelings and attitudes of individuals to understanding organisational transitions and corporate values (Fransella, 2003). Until now, however, it has not been employed in a major empirical study in theology and ministry.

Although there has been much written about women in ministry, and to a lesser extent women in church leadership, over the last decade or so, relatively little of this has been based on primary data such as that which these two research studies have been able to generate.

This thesis comes at a significant point in the history of the Church of England¹ as it continues to discover a way forward following the rejection, by General Synod in November 2012, of proposed legislation, which would have allowed women to become bishops.

Within this context, the thesis explores how these women in senior positions make sense of their leadership roles, what enables them in their roles and asks whether women leaders in the church are able, 'to boldly go...'

¹ Hereafter referred to as the 'church'.

Preface

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

What is leadership?

“Leadership is a subject that has long excited interest among scholars and lay persons alike. The term connotes images of powerful, dynamic persons who command victorious armies, direct corporate empires from atop gleaming skyscrapers, or shape the course of nations. Much of our description of history is the story of military, political, religious, and social leaders. The exploits of brave and clever leaders are the essence of many legends and myths. The widespread fascination with leadership may be because it is such a mysterious process, as well as one that touches everyone’s life” (Yukl, cited by Hall, 1996, p.139).

Ideas of what constitutes good or bad leadership abound, as does the plethora of books, articles and training programmes purporting both to help people to be more effective leaders, and explaining what leadership might be. Most people have an intuitive sense of what they understand by leadership and many recognise good or bad leadership when they see it, even though this may not be easy to articulate.

Despite the thousands of articles and books written about leadership there is still no agreed definition, “... our understanding is limited even if our information is apparently unlimited” (Grint, 2005, p.1).

It is perhaps this combination of the “mysterious process” of leadership that Yukl refers to, coupled with a collective (albeit culturally variant) understanding of what leaders do and are, that gives leadership its power and helps explain why it is so difficult to pin down and come to an agreed definition. Indeed, for Western it is the fact that we try to look too hard for what leadership might be that makes it so difficult to find because, as he suggests, “... it is all around us, in the processes, behaviours, and the social systems in which we work on a daily basis” (2008, p.40). However, despite these challenges and without being too prescriptive, it seems worth reflecting on what leadership might be and what might constitute effective leadership in a particular context; indeed, it does appear that when we look at the literature, a number of key strands seem to emerge which, broadly speaking, cluster around the themes of *process, person and context*.

Adair and Nelson, for example, argue that leadership is primarily about the process of how leadership happens; setting people and ideas into motion, combining how things are done with an outcome, or, "taking people on a journey" (2004, p.4). An understanding of leadership focused on process involves leadership that provides direction and inspiration on the "journey", creating teams and leading by example; it is especially important during times of change. Perhaps unsurprisingly, such leadership is often includes a spiritual dimension (Adler, 1999, p.240/241). Others focus more on the person of the leader. Hall suggests that leadership is a special form of power, which involves the ability to elicit what he terms "voluntary compliance" in a broad range of matters, using "persuasion". He distinguishes leadership from simply having power by suggesting that leaders will demonstrate "innovativeness in ideas and decision making" (1996, p.139/141). In contrast, Grint (2005) highlights two significant points about the context. The first is that leadership can be seen most clearly when it is exercised in the context of the community (p.31ff); secondly, leaders learn to be leaders not so much by acquiring certain skills or attributes, but by learning from those they lead (p.100/ 105/ 115). Consequently, he asserts that leadership occurs in community and becomes a reflection of that community (p.132-135; Adair and Nelson, 2004, p.60).

In some senses these distinctions are, of course, somewhat arbitrary, since at any given time certain aspects will be more, or less, present. They do however serve as useful pointers for the purposes of this discussion and, more broadly, as we seek to discover something about how women in senior positions in the church construe their leadership roles.

Many writers on leadership note the necessity of managing as well as leading and highlight the distinction between them (Percy, 2010, p.115; Avis, 1992, p.96; Western, 2008, p.36; Pattison, 2007, p.287). Both have pitfalls, both are means and not ends (Adair and Nelson, 2004, p.85/86), consequently, there is a need for caution in adopting management techniques uncritically. In addition, theories of management can carry with them implicit ideologies akin to a faith. Therefore, Pattison argues, they should not simply be accepted as either neutral, or necessarily benign practices or beliefs (2000, p.285/292; 2007, p.71). Indeed, he suggests that faith-free leadership is

probably not possible, and may not be desirable in today's world because, "Leadership is, to a large extent, a creative and aesthetic activity. It contains important symbolic, non-rational, and even spiritual elements" (2007, p.81). He thinks that leaders need to be aware of their assumptions and beliefs so that they can be critical and reflective leaders.

The terms management and leadership are mostly seen as distinct. However, sometimes they are used interchangeably, for example, managers are often called on to lead, and conversely leaders have to manage (Pattison, 2007, p. 72). In order to be effective, managers need to show leadership too (Western, 2008, p.39). Yet, when management and leadership are discussed together, almost invariably management is seen in a less positive light, as a diversion from the real task of leading (Percy, 2010, p.128), or as being about controlling things and with a much narrower scope (Adair and Nelson, 2004, p.6). An illustration of this is Greenleaf's argument that managing and administrating are maintenance functions and help to keep an institution "where it is". In contrast, leadership is about "venturing creatively" and "initiating and showing the way" (1998, p.31ff). Avis highlights the importance of competence and good management skills as a "bottom line", but he also goes on to say, "He [Jesus] was not looking for managers, but for *learners* and *leaders* - disciples and apostles" (1992, p.96). That is, leaders who can identify a vision and focus on the "primary" tasks of that vision.

Therefore, in relation to *process* there is certainly a different emphasis depending on whether we are talking about management or leadership. Management is seen to be more about competently keeping the status quo and leadership about innovation and vision. It is also the case with *context* where, as Percy suggests, management is more relevant to organisations that have clear goals, whilst leadership is more applicable to institutions and organisations where there is ongoing transformation (2010, p.115). However, it is in the *person* aspect of leadership where the distinction between management and leadership seems most significant because, whereas management focuses principally on task, leadership is concerned with the person of the leader, so rather than being simply a shift in emphasis, this implies a completely different focus. This is perhaps especially important in the church where the leader's role is seen as

symbolic and the leader is required to embody the values and beliefs (Avis, 1996, p.108; Percy, 2010, p.115). Thus, it appears that although the terms leadership and management are often used interchangeably, they are in fact understood quite distinctly. Consequently, it is useful to separate them out, as it is important to clarify people's differing understandings and assumptions as we seek to understand leadership in both theory and practice (Western, 2008, p.35).

In his theory of Personal Construct Psychology, George Kelly (1991) only briefly mentions leadership as a topic in its own right. The focus of his discussion concerns leadership roles and their relationship to the Sociality Corollary². Kelly suggests that different types of leaders are chosen depending on the understanding about what a particular situation demands³. He gives various examples of requirements by groups that will demand different kinds of leaders. Sometimes, originality and ingenuity are required; at other times a group might need to be protected from a perceived threat or challenge, or, if maintenance activities are prioritised a devotion to duty will be regarded as important. If a group is concerned about their freedom of action they may look for someone who they think will allow more permissiveness; and if the group is aware of their interdependence, they may choose a leader who can mobilise and motivate them. Kelly argues that whilst prestige and status may be common to all leadership, we need to be acutely aware within this of the variety of leadership patterns.

Thus, we arrive at his definition of a leader:

"A leader is one who performs any of the variety of jobs which are properly recognised as leadership jobs. He may do the job because of the expectancies with which he is surrounded; in that case, he 'may perform better than he is able'. Again, he may do the job with such originality that his 'leadership' is recognised only in the pages of history" (1991, p.70).

Kelly argues that a leader does not have to be like certain types of people in order to understand them, but the leader does have to understand them in order to mobilize and lead (1991, p.71). Kelly's – albeit brief – discussion of leadership and his basic

² See Appendix A

³ This links with Western's suggestion that leadership acquires its meaning, in part, from the social context in which it occurs (2008, p.23).

philosophical stance of *constructive alternativism*, offers the openness and flexibility required for an exploration of leadership. It is also consistent with the notion that leadership involves thinking about *where* and *how* leadership takes place, as well as *who* leads.

For the purposes of this thesis, therefore, we have identified leadership as something that involves context, person and process and, in a pragmatic sense, is characterised by vision, innovativeness, care and courage. In addition, as Percy reminds us, true Christian leadership is ultimately not about us but rather about God; it is, "... the impression left; the indelible marks of God's presence and leading that point back to their source" (2010, p.129).

We are thus in a position to define what a leader is in our context:

A person who embodies the values and symbols of the church in a way that enables them to facilitate an ongoing process of transformation for themselves, others and the institution itself which is life-giving and ultimately points to God.

Women in the church

“According to your correspondent ... more women would sit in our boardrooms if only they were ‘racing fit, intellectually and physically sharp enough to think on their (their) feet...’ And so on and on. Like the men who occupy all the boardrooms now, is the implication. Well, as a survivor of several male-dominated businesses, I’d like to quote intellectually sharp businessperson Sheelagh Whittaker, who said that we will only have true equality when we have as many incompetent women on boards as incompetent men.”⁴

The sort of leadership the Church of England⁵ requires is outlined in a number of Church Reports, the Canons of the Church of England, and in the Orders of Service, both for the Ordination of Priests and for the Ordination and Consecration of Bishops. The Canons of the Church of England lay down, succinctly, the legal requirements for those in senior positions.

The Pilling Report published in 2007, stresses a number of things, which are relevant here. An instance of this is the report’s reaffirmation of vocation in its assertion that an appointment to a senior post is not only about being competent, but that the person also needs to be perceived by others as having a vocation or a calling to that particular ministry. The skills required are based on fundamental Christian values. For example, the ability to relate to others reflects an understanding of the nature of God in the Trinity. The life of Jesus provides the basis for other skills, such as the embodiment of dignity, sacrifice, openness, prayerfulness, humility and the ability to be prophetic (1.46). The report recognises that talent needs to be identified and developed, and suggests that there should be structured support and training for potential leaders. There is also recognition that on top of the legal requirements of the job there should also be a more detailed “role and person specification” (6.1.6).⁶ The Pilling Report also stresses the importance of fostering diversity and looks at four groups of people who,

⁴ Letter from Julie Harrison to *The Independent*, taken from *The Week*, 5 March 2011.

⁵ Hereafter referred to as the 'church' unless specified.

⁶ At the time of writing the report in 2007, the authors observed that only just over half of archdeacons had a role specification. In this main research study, however, about two thirds of the archdeacons had a detailed description of their role that they had worked out in conjunction with their bishop. In contrast, neither of the two theological educators nor the cathedral deans had a role specification; most, however, were working on their own version.

it argues, are under-represented in the senior leadership of the church. The largest of these four groups is women. Although the report makes a number of recommendations, there is clearly more work to be done in specifying exactly how diversity should be fostered, particularly in relation to enabling women into senior positions in the church (4.2.4).

Leaders in the church are required to exercise their roles in ways that are often symbolic; they are expected to bear the institution's values and attempt to be strategic but in a collegial and pragmatic way. Often this can feel, as Percy suggests, like "herding cats" (2010, p.113). This is difficult at the best of times but for women, the challenge is perhaps even greater.

Over the last few decades, there has also been plentiful discussion and debate about leadership and gender difference. Some of this focuses on the concept of the glass ceiling and bias against women, and some on possible gender differences in style and effectiveness.⁷ This discussion has often produced conflicting results (Ward, 2008, p. 123ff). Although there is widespread agreement that gender does make a difference in "virtually all aspects of social experience", there is little consensus about how these differences are experienced by different groups in different contexts (Willhauck, 2005, p.40). Ironically, even those clergywomen who felt there should not be a focus on differences, seemed to show such a difference in their attempts not to offend conservative colleagues and others who found their ministry difficult (Stevens, 1996, p.287).

Although there is much written on the subject, there have been relatively few empirical studies looking to see whether there are differences between men and women in their exercise of ministry, other than those which indicate that both women and men leaders in the church are rather different from the norm anyway (Ward, 2008, p. 126).

The study by Goldsmith and Eckhardt is one of the few and they conclude that in ministry a blending of both feminine and masculine traits is required, which is

⁷ For example, nearly three quarters of respondents in a study of women clergy in Canada believed that being a woman affected how they carried out their ministry, primarily in the areas of caring for others, physical presence, inclusiveness, and the exercise of authority in a non-hierarchical and collegial way (Stevens, 1996, p.285).

somewhat different from other vocations and professions (1996, p.251). This is supported by Nauss, who although only looking at male clergy, concludes that effective ministry requires both a cluster of factors around task-orientation and a cluster of factors around relations-orientation (1996, p. 93). It seems, therefore, that to be an effective minister requires both traditional feminine and masculine skills. Whilst this may lead to some sex role conflict, for example, when men are required to exercise traits that are more feminine and vice versa, it does not seem to indicate that there are great differences between how women and men actually exercise their ministries.

Senior leadership though may be a different matter. Although it is difficult to provide evidence, quantify or articulate how gender difference impacts on behaviours or on effectiveness in church leadership, many people report that it does and there is some support for these views (Faull, 2006, p.9; Willhauck, 2005, p.19; Purvis, 1995, p.100). For example, Willhauck cites research that seems to suggest that in the church, as in many professional spheres, women outperform their male counterparts. This research suggests that this stems in part from the fact that women have often overcome obstacles and are being held to higher standards than men (2005, p.19). In another study, involving two large churches in America led by women ministers, Purvis observes that even though there is no obvious evidence that women embody "women's ways of leadership", gender was significant as a set of expectations for how men and women would be; these expectations then intersected with other cultural factors. She also noted that as women became more accepted and, in some senses, taken for granted, gender expectations seem to expand both for the women themselves and for those in their congregations (1995, p.100ff).

The inclusion of women as priests, Faull argues, has perhaps not led to the significant changes that people expected, because for many years clergy (men and women) training included areas like spirituality, pastoral studies and counselling. As a result, many male priests were already equipped with skills previously been seen as feminine. She also cites Helen Thorn, who succinctly expresses the paradox, that women, "... had to prove simultaneously that ordination had benefited the church while demonstrating that our presence had not fostered radical change" (2006, p.8).

Hedges (2010), herself in a senior church role, says she is often asked what specific difference it makes having women in senior posts in the church. Her answer is to say that she finds it a difficult question to answer because it is almost impossible to, "... distinguish between what one brings to a situation as a woman as distinct from what one brings because you are you!" (p.72). Her research attempts to address this question by asking a number of male colleagues to identify whether they have discovered any particular differences when their work situation has included working with female colleagues. Although a number found it difficult to articulate the differences, most of them identified a number of things, including women bringing a new dimension to ministry. They also reported that women were not so competitive, had a sense of wanting to solve problems, a commitment to working together and helping people feel comfortable. Most significant of all was the comment that having women colleagues in a team made the team more representative of humanity as a whole (p.74). This is similar to Faull's observation that one of the things that women contribute to ministry is that of "being human"; consequently, contributing to a fuller understanding of what is normative humanity within human diversity (2006, p.7).

The discussion about gender differences emerges for a variety of reasons, one being that the development of effective institutions, organisations and societies increasingly requires that women and men (and people from a multitude of different backgrounds), learn to work and be together (Tolbert et al., 1999, p.200; Adler, 1999, p.260). The issue of gender continues to be particularly acute in the church. Although women's roles may be legally sanctioned, they often meet resistance to change and those in senior positions are still seen as something of a novelty, with women experiencing many of the challenges that come with being a pioneer (Lehman, 1996, p.262). For example, Willhauck argues that even though women have made great strides in ministry and are clearly skilled they still struggle with being perceived as competent as a group and leave ordained ministry at a higher rate than men (2005, p.39). Rather than any "mysterious biological reason", Graham would argue that women's distinctiveness has developed "strategically rather than ontologically" as a result of their different experience of being in a church which has often marginalised them (1995, p.51). This leads Faull to conclude that, in spite of the risks associated with the

discussion around gender difference, we must try to speak about it to enable women to contribute fully to the life of the church. She thus observes, that the, "... challenge for men in leadership is to share the power, and their assumptions about how power operates. The challenge for women is to have the confidence to offer their giftedness in leadership" (2006, p.9).

Women are still some way from being taken for granted or accepted as being usual in senior leadership roles in organisational life, and perhaps especially within the church context. The church still looks at women's leadership in a different way from how it looks at the leadership of men even if, at the very least, this is because women in senior positions in the church are still somewhat of a novelty. Consequently, women, as leaders, also experience the church differently from their male counterparts, partly because there is no large background of tradition into which they can be absorbed. Women in senior positions are the torchbearers who have to carry the assumptions and expectations as the church moves in its understanding of itself and how it relates to the world.

Chapter One

A RESEARCH JOURNEY

AN EXPLORATION OF HOW A GROUP OF WOMEN INCUMBENTS CONSTRUE THEIR MINISTRY (Ministry Focused Study MFS)

A Research Journey

This thesis contains the results of two empirical studies focusing on the ministry and leadership of women in the Church of England. Two key events, one in 1992 and the other in 2012, almost exactly twenty years apart, provide the framework and context in which these studies take place.

The thesis helps to explain why so few women apply for senior positions in the Church of England. The first study, in 2007, explores how women incumbents in a diocese make sense of their particular roles and ministries.⁸ The focus is initially on women incumbents, as the senior leaders for the church emerge from this group. This Ministry Focused Study (MFS) thus begins not only to address the issue itself but also acts as a pilot study for the use of PCP. The second and substantive Research Based Thesis (RBT), undertaken in 2008, uses these insights to investigate the primary question of the thesis:

How do women in senior positions in the Church of England construe their leadership?

Fourteen women (out of 15) who were in some of the most senior positions in the Church of England - Cathedral Deans, Archdeacons and Theological College Principals - took part in the research project.

The central argument is that effective leadership for these women consists of three core dimensions:

The *Person* of the leader

The *Process* of leadership

The *Context* in which leadership takes place

Although there has been much written about women in ministry, and to a lesser extent women in church leadership, over the last decade or so, relatively little of this has been based on primary data such as that which these two research studies have been able to generate.

This first chapter of the thesis outlines the process of the research journey in relation to the two studies and gives an overview of the results, as well as issues and questions

⁸ This Ministry Focused Study (MFS) was submitted in longer form as part of the DThMin degree. *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: An Exploration of how a group of women incumbents construe their ministry* (Rees, D. 2007).

raised from the first Ministry Focused Study. The thesis then contains three further chapters.

Both studies employ a method of interviewing called Repertory Grids, derived from a theory of personality proposed by George Kelly known as Personal Construct Psychology (PCP). Chapter 2 gives some basic PCP theory and its use in practice, with a particular focus on how to use Repertory Grids in conducting empirical research. PCP is becoming increasingly well used in a variety of contexts, including education, social science (Cohen et al., 2000) and business research (Stewart and Stewart, 1980). It can be used with individuals, groups or organisations to explore a range of issues from beliefs, feelings and attitudes of individuals to understanding organisational transitions and corporate values (Fransella, 2003). It has been a helpful tool in professional practice as a psychologist, researcher and theological educator. From the standpoint of those who are interviewed, it enables the discovery of some of the key issues and perspectives, as well as giving insight into both the relative importance of those issues and how those key perspectives interact with each other.

The core and substantive chapter of the thesis is the third one, giving the results of the Research Based Thesis (RBT). Chapter 4 is the concluding part of the thesis and as well summarising the main insights, asks whether women leaders in the church are able 'to boldly go...'

This thesis comes at a significant point in the history of the Church of England as it continues to discover a way forward following the rejection, by General Synod in November 2012, of proposed legislation, which would have allowed women to become bishops.

Two key events: 1992 and 2012

On the 11th November 1992, I together with several hundred other people, stood outside Church House in Westminster waiting for the result of the vote by General Synod on the ordination of women to the priesthood in the Church of England.

It was not unanimous but as people quickly did the numerical calculations in their heads, the crowd erupted with the realisation that the vote had reached the two-thirds majority it required. The vote made history; many people both outside and inside the

church would frequently come up and comment enthusiastically about the outcome. As Sue Hope comments in *Voices of this Calling*, "...I was overwhelmed with people: all sorts of people, black, white, female, male, rich, poor the business man, the office cleaner, the shop assistant, the bus conductor, the woman with her shopping bags...I was overwhelmed with their joy! 'Well done!' 'Isn't it great?', 'Isn't it wonderful?', 'About time too!'...Something had been done. Something which resonated at a deep level...It seemed as though, for a while, people were hearing an echo of the kingdom" (2002, p.199).

Almost exactly 20 years later, I sat in a meeting with twenty-five other women priests and a diocesan bishop to discuss the impact of the vote by General Synod taken in November 2012 not to admit women to the episcopate. Just as in 1992, many of the women reported that people had approached them, from both outside and inside the church expressing dismay at the decision not to ordain women as bishops.

Here are some of the comments from that meeting:

"I love Christ, I want bring people to Christ but I'm also aware that I'm bringing them into an institution and it's not one that I know if I can belong to any more."

"I'm most worried about my 20-year-old son, for him the church now seems even more irrelevant, he simply can't understand it."

"My whole ministry has been spent in the church which hasn't really ever accepted me as a woman. I'm just heartbroken it probably won't happen in my lifetime."

(A woman in her late 70s).

"It felt like a slap in the face, like all the things I have experienced as a woman priest are just being thrown back at me."

"It has to make you wonder what provision would ever be enough."

"There is a lack of senior women in the diocese; there are very few role models and women's voices are not heard in the power structures, the women are just not there."

"I'm put off applying for posts in bigger churches because I've seen women who are very good just not getting selected."

Clearly, here is evidence of that "resonance at a deep level" that Sue Hope speaks of (op. cit.). None of these women was likely to be a bishop; nevertheless, they are deeply

affected by how other women are treated and are acutely aware of the lack of women in senior roles. In a broader sense, they are concerned about how people view the church and there is a clear connection between the rejection of women as bishops and the value of their own ministries.

The main questions

There were three primary impetuses for this thesis. The first of these is my experience as a woman priest; the second, my appointment as Assistant Director of Ministry and Training, with particular responsibility for curate training; and, third, questions posed to me by bishops and other senior colleagues, about women's deployment in the church and diocese.

Since my ordination in 1996, I have come to understand that although there is generally an acceptance of my priestly ministry, it is, even now, not entirely 'normal'. I am still a *woman* priest rather than simply a priest.

It is not always the case, however, that people see women less positively than they see men but simply that women are more noticed and observed.

These differences have been evident to me in a variety of ways. Ranging from the billboard headline outside a village newsagent, announcing that the village had its, "first woman vicar in 1000 years of history", to a variety of comments both positive and negative.

For example:

"Of course, they have greater difficulty managing their work/ home life balance, with kids and so forth" (Training Incumbent about a female curate).

"I'm so glad we've got a woman" (following a new appointment).

"I didn't think it was right that you came here but now I think you're OK" (from a non-church goer after taking her husband's funeral).

There are also assumptions made that the woman must be the curate rather than the Vicar, or ambiguous comments such as, "things are different now..."

In addition, there are also different assumptions and expectations of lay people depending whether or not the priest is male or female. As an illustration, a male priest is considered a good parent if he spends time with his children but when a female

priest does the same, it is used as evidence that she obviously cannot be as committed to the parish. On one notable occasion when I was a Team Vicar, a layperson reprimanded me, when I chose to go in an ambulance with my 2-year-old son following his emergency admission to hospital rather than to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

However, perhaps the most vivid (and frightening) experience was during a trip I led to the Holy Land with a group of people from a number of local churches. We had booked a slot on one of the outside altars (at the far end of a field), at the church of St. Peter the Rock near the Sea of Galilee, in order to celebrate a Eucharist together. The group had witnessed the many divisions, not so much between the different faith groups within the Holy Land but rather between the various Christian groups. Although this was sad for people to observe, we were somehow always one-step removed from it. In preparation for our service, I had put on my dog collar, a stole over my normal clothes, and had just started to lead the group in a simple Eucharist when our Palestinian guide came running up the field towards us shouting. "You must stop, you must stop, he's got a knife, he's going to kill you, and he's going to slit your throat". A (male) priest dressed in a long black cassock, holding a knife, was indeed following him, on his way to stop this priest, this woman priest from celebrating a Eucharist. I hastily took off my stole, removed the pottery plate and wine glass from the altar and through the guide reassured the priest that I would stop. I could not lead the group's celebration of the Eucharist because I was a woman. It was a very poignant reminder of the challenge of being in a divided church. The pain of living in a church which does not think as one about the issue of women's ordination and role, goes to the very core of who I am as a person, as a woman, as a priest; it has been the most costly part of my life and ministry.

The second impetus for the thesis began in 2006, when after ten years in parish ministry I took on the role of Assistant Director of Ministry and Training, where one of my main responsibilities was for the training of curates in a diocese. Experiences and questions I had had as a woman priest now had to become more broadly applicable. Not only was I one of the more senior (and therefore visible) women in the diocese but

also questions around the role of women priests became more sharply focused as a result of my role as a trainer and mentor for other ordained women.

I observed that whilst there were equal numbers of male and female curates being ordained, relatively few of the women seemed to want to take up stipendiary diocesan roles post curacy. One element was that a few more of the women being ordained were Non Stipendiary or Self Supporting Ministers (NSM, SSM) but this accounted for relatively small numbers.

A bigger factor was that many of the women curates who were contemplating stipendiary ministry expressed concerns around a number of issues. These included issues to do with boundaries between home and parish life, questions of confidence and wanting to challenge perceived ways of working. For example, some wanted to explore the possibilities of working part time or undertaking a chaplaincy role, in order to achieve a more sustainable work and family life balance with clearer boundaries. Other women were unsure about being a "public figure" and felt they did not want to "be on their own" in a parish. Connected with this was a desire that many expressed, to work more collaboratively or as part of a team. This, however, was not a model that they had witnessed in parishes they knew.

Whilst many of the male curates were eager to complete their curacy and "get their own parishes", many of the women, who were equally competent, would say things such as, "I'm not sure I'm ready for my own parish yet", "I'd like to have more responsibility but I'd like to work as part of the team".

In addition, when the empirical research for these studies took place in 2007 and 2008, the relative number of female to male incumbents was still quite low. Consequently, there were a limited number of role models, "at the next stage", for the curates to look to.

Even as curates, most of the women were struggling to develop patterns of ministry that would take account of family life, enable them to challenge the expectation that they would simply model traditional ways of working (that they perceive to be masculine) and would fulfil them.

Some statistics, which are relevant here, were those given Vivienne Faull, in her 2006 Eric Symes Memorial lecture, *A New Song in a Strange Land*. Whereas in 1995 there

were 144 women and 314 men priested, in 2005 there were almost equal numbers of men and women being priested, about 260 of each. She also observed that the places where men and women were employed in the church, were very different, with a relatively high number of women working in chaplancies and as NSM's (which are either local or tend to have more equal opportunities policies) and that relatively few women were employed in senior positions in the church (p.7/8).

The ongoing debate about women bishops and the reality of relatively few women in senior roles provides the context for the third impetus for this thesis. In essence, this was a question, frequently asked by bishops and other senior men in the church: "Why don't more women apply for senior positions?"

In part, this is of course because there are simply fewer women incumbents in dioceses who often lead smaller churches, so the "talent pool" from which senior women come is more restricted. More significantly however, is the debate about "women bishops", which makes women reflect on their own ministries, evaluate how the church views them and connects with the issue of visibility when there are relatively few women in senior roles.

Two studies

In a sense, this thesis investigates the issue of why more women do not apply for senior positions in the church from both ends.

Firstly, in the Ministry Focused Study, from the perspective of women incumbents, who are the *pool* of women from whom those in senior roles will be selected, the *role models*, *next stage* for women curates and the largest group of *visible* women in a diocese who are clearly exercising leadership roles.

Secondly, in the Research Based Thesis, we approach the issue from the standpoint of those who are already in senior positions in the church. This a substantial piece of empirical research exploring how women in senior positions in the Church of England inhabit or make sense of their leadership roles and what enables them in these roles.

By presenting the results of a comprehensive in-depth interview process - 14 out of the 15 women in these roles in 2008 took part in the research - we discover some answers to the questions that many have in relation to the women in these roles.

For example:

Why did they apply?

What did getting the job involve?

How do they manage their roles?

What do they think about it?

Senior women are relatively few in number and therefore still regarded by many as "torchbearers" or "pioneers". These senior women are clearly also seen as symbolic in a number of ways. That there are women "visible" in the hierarchy of the church is very significant to other women. How these senior women fare directly affects both how other women feel about their ministries and on the value placed by the church on their ministries. Cathedral Deans and Theological Educators are symbolic and visible as national figures in the church. Archdeacons too are symbolic in a wider sense. They are also immediate senior role models within diocesan structures, and for some incumbents, may represent a realistic "next step".

However, before we continue to explore the results of the research with these senior women any further, we return to the initial study. The remainder of this chapter, therefore, outlines the results and issues raised in the first study carried out in 2007 (MFS). The study not only acted as a pilot study for using PCP as a research method but also provided some insights into how women incumbents, in one diocese, made sense of their ministries, lives and the institution for which they work.

An exploration of how a group of women incumbents construe their ministry

In 2007 there were 175 full time male stipendiary clergy (83%) and 36 full time female stipendiary clergy (17%) employed in the diocese. Of the 36 women 18⁹ of these are incumbents (the majority of the rest are curates, and one or two, like myself, work for the diocese) and it is amongst this group of women incumbents that the research took place.

Of the 18 women incumbents, in the diocese 14 women took part, each completing ten short grid questionnaires, based on the issues and themes raised from earlier in-depth interviews with 7 of the women.¹⁰

In brief, the study explored how the women made sense of their roles in the diocese, as part of the Church of England and as people, both by looking at how things were now and also from the perspective of how they would like things to be.

In addition, each of the women ranked the key themes in order of importance for themselves, in order of the importance that they perceived them to be for the diocese and for the Church of England.

Key themes

There were thirteen key themes emerging from the in-depth interviews used in the grid questionnaires:

Being able to be the person, I really am in role

Being able to be outward focused

Being affirmed in your role

Having the ability to influence change

Collaborative working

Developing new patterns of ministry (v Living with inherited patterns)

Being prepared to take risks

Being seen as a priest rather than as a woman priest

Being a public figure in the community

⁹ There were in fact 19 but one was just about to retire and did not wish to take part in the research.

¹⁰ The Grid Questionnaire sheets can be found in Appendix B.

Moving forward (v Stagnating)

Working with things as they are (Comfortable v Uncomfortable)

Giving of myself to God

Having an impact on changing people's lives for the better

The data from the interviews was analysed in three main ways to discover firstly, how the key themes, identified by the women, relate to each other; secondly, how the *now* and *ideal* connect with the themes; and, thirdly, the relative importance of the themes to each of the women. The results presented reflect these different approaches to the analysis.

The data for the first part of the analysis, exploring the connections between the themes, was primarily derived from the interviews (in-depth and grid) and therefore in a similar format to the data in the main thesis. It is therefore possible to present this section of the results in a way that is consistent with the remainder of the thesis, that is, within the three core dimensions of person, process and context.

Person, Process and Context

The discussion pertaining to the *person* of the incumbent was around a number of issues. These included the connections between role and person, their experience as woman who were also ordained, and gender differences in ministry.

A number of the woman highlighted, "being affirmed in your role", as particularly important. Feeling you are known is evidence of affirmation; that people know what you are doing in your role rather than just being allowed to "get on with it". Working well with colleagues, at different levels, is vital and allows this affirming to happen. A number of the women reported that they were grateful for the opportunities, which enabled them to exercise their ministry responsibilities. Generally, they were positive about working with others to achieve the same ends.

Perhaps rather tellingly, nine of the women expressed some surprise (and in one case relief), that they were, "up to the job". This probably says something about their levels of confidence in applying for these roles as incumbents, as well as helping to explain why most of the women, in 2007 at least, were willing to be patient with the pace of

change in the church. It is not difficult to see how this lack of confidence in their abilities is one of the reasons why women are reluctant to apply for senior jobs.

Another aspect emphasised by many of the women was the impossibility of separating out your role, your priesthood and personhood. One woman giving the analogy of priesthood being like motherhood, "... once you are a mother you are always a mother, whatever happens." The roles these women inhabit therefore become an essential part of who they are and this can lead to some tensions that seem to be particularly acute for these women incumbents. As an example, a couple of the women observed that many people consider clergy, "public property". It can therefore be difficult sometimes to, "know who you really are" or whether "you are being fully the person God has created you to be"; when this is coupled with women's ministry being "always worthy of comment" it can "sometimes lead to great weariness." As one woman expressed, "I long to be a private person with a role who knows who I am, without always having this defined for you by a community of people who feel they own you." Being an ordained woman engaging in ministry, was generally spoken about very positively, for example, "it gives you a real sense of contentment", "a sense of wholeness", "ministry fits like a glove", "a feeling you've arrived", "fulfilment coupled with some confidence that I can contribute to the journey the church is on". Despite this, a number of the women still did not feel that they were fully accepted, "... it still remains something a bit unusual and especially for the women who have some additional responsibility within the diocese."

There is clearly still a very real sense of carrying "the weight of the reputation of women's ministry" and feeling that all women's ministry will be judged by what they do as women. "I just get so fed up with always being the first women to do ... always being noticed, my ministry always being commented on." One of the women gave an example of a working relationship that had broken down between two local clergy colleagues; deeming the primary factor in the breakdown to be because the two people involved were both women, and, "... as everyone knows women can't work together."

John Saxbee's observation is very pertinent here, "Perhaps we will only be fully a whole and healthy Church when a woman priest can go ill, or astray, or slightly dotty

without women's ministry as a whole being thereby diminished – as if male clergy didn't occasionally fall victim to these all too human experiences" (2002, p.194).

Several women echoed this sentiment and looked forward to the time when that they would be allowed, "to fail" or do things "less than perfectly" without it, "... damaging women's ministry as a whole, in order that we can be a whole and inclusive church as God intends."

All of the women clearly thought of themselves explicitly as a 'women' priests and most expressed frustration at the situation. "Ordination and being a woman can't really be separated out, as they are both an essential part of who I am, and yet I should be able to just be ordained but the reality is that I'm always an ordained woman."

Another woman noted that although she did not think, "being the token woman" was the ideal situation because she would rather be considered, "just a priest", she tries to use it. Indeed she sees it as her "responsibility", to use it in a positive and confident way to work towards the church as she would like it, as an institution that is "... more inclusive and accepting of women's ministry as normal."

For the women who had additional responsibilities in the diocese, (for example, Area Deans, Diocesan Director of Ordinands, Mission Advisor), they observed they were even more likely to be seen as women priests rather than as priests. They recognised this created particular "tensions" for them, between the challenge and excitement of having a "distinctive role" and a desire for women's ministry just to be regarded as being "normal" which were especially acute in a diocese with no women in very senior roles.

Although all the women felt that being always seen as a women priest was frustrating and far from how they wanted it to be, they also believed that it was not a priority for the diocese or the church. Because woman can in theory can take up most roles in the church (apart from being bishops), one woman suggested that the church and diocese assume "it's already policy and so should be integrated into the thinking of the system, so no-one gives it any attention anymore."

Gender difference in ministry was a topic that arose spontaneously in most of the interviews. Two of the women stressed that they did not want to claim that men and

women were different, with one of them very adamant that there were no differences between men and women. However, in the in-depth interview it became obvious that although she was not prepared to acknowledge there were any differences between men and women, being “an ordained women” was central to how she viewed her ministry and made connections with both the diocese and church as a whole.

One interesting account on the subject of gender difference was a woman who recounted how her grown up son and daughter had reacted to the process of leading her to ordination. For her son the main issue was to do with “integrity, about the church practising what it preached.” His concern was with what the “outside world” would think of the church. For her daughter, on the other hand, the issue was focused on, “valuing individuals as they are, wanting the church to progress by enabling women to achieve and use their skills just as men are able to do.”

The majority of the women thought there probably were some differences between women and men in ministry although found it difficult to articulate or cite much evidence for this other than a view, held by a few of the women, that they tended to work more collaboratively than their male colleagues.

We now move to think about the *process*, or in other words, how these incumbents exercise ministry. The discussion explores both the wider issue of how these women relate to the structures of the church and diocese, as well as a focus on patterns of ministry, including the issue of collaboration, which is where we begin.

All of the women seemed to be trying in various ways to “develop new patterns of ministry” although they were conscious that when they expressed the view, for example, that they might not want to work 6 days a week, this would be interpreted by some as a, “lack of commitment”. They were also aware of the assumption that women prefer to work collaboratively and a few of them expressed some ambivalence about this assumption.

As an example, one said, “In relation to new patterns and inherited patterns, I make a positive choice to work with both; it’s not about one or the other.”

In a similar vein, another one commented, “I like to work collaboratively when it is appropriate, that is, with appropriate times to use authority too but I also like to work

on my own as well.” Therefore, most of the women thought they did attempt to work collaboratively, although that might mean different things to people, “one size won’t fit all but it can still be good.” They were also clearly aware of some of the issues around working this way, including one woman who stated, “The danger is that collaboration can sometimes collapse into a lack of leadership.”

The women had obviously given a lot of thought in both trying to work out patterns of ministry that were compatible with the many other roles they found themselves with as women, whilst also being alert to the importance of working that out within a community which has necessary authority structures. There was a recognition that structures and appropriate authority are necessary to ensure the appropriate use of power but also an attempt within those structures to work out some new patterns of working.

The discussion around the *context* in which the women exercised their roles as incumbents, focused on what was termed their “current reality” which was largely about the diocese, together with their thoughts about the possibility of change. Only two of the women spoke positively about the diocese, and these were two of the five women, who as well as being incumbents, had additional responsibilities in the diocese. Most of the women, however, at best expressed ambivalence, reporting that they felt rather dislocated from the diocese.

All the women were clear that the bishop was a key element in how the diocese was seen, some questioned what exactly was meant by the diocese and most of them found it painful to be honest about the diocese as they also felt some sort of loyalty to it (whatever 'it' might be).

Here are some of the many comments the women made about the diocese, its definition, how they feel about it and how they perceive their relationship with the diocese:

“Is it about the people in it or about the hierarchy?”

“It’s not clear what the diocese is or how it should be defined; is it the individuals within it or is it an organisation?”

“It’s difficult to know what the diocese is – is it one or two key people or the bishop?”

"I really want to separate out what I feel about the diocese and what I feel about the Church of England because there is a difference."

"I feel critical of the diocese – there is little accountability or vision – everyone is just encouraged to be in their own individual parishes."

"How does the diocese see me? I have no idea, I don't think they do."

"I feel affirmed in my parish but not elsewhere."

"The deanery is the main link with the diocese."

Only the woman who had the clearest additional diocesan role was able to say, "The diocese is primarily about the bishop but also about the people and a geographical area. I feel very much part of it as an organisation and affirmed in my role within it."

Generally, however, there is a feeling of dislocation from the diocese, despite there being a number of quite strong connections in reality; attributed to the fact that the bishop represents the diocese. Therefore, if one feels disconnected from him, either because one feels he does not know you, or because there is little understanding of who he is and his vision, or because the relationship is not perceived in a positive light, then one feels separate from the diocese as a whole.

Despite the ambivalence or negativity towards the diocese, most of the women accepted the necessity of working with how things were. Overall, they perceive the church to be in "a process of change" or "on a journey." Indeed, they felt that one of the responsibilities of ministry was "working to change things for the better" within the current reality. Alternatively, as another woman put it, "You have to be part of the process, actively engaging with the diocese and with the wider church, rather than disengaging from it or feeling overwhelmed by the enormity of it all."

There was a general feeling of optimism about the church moving forward although coupled with a feeling of frustration that the structures do not always allow the use distinctive talents and gifts; consequently, there can sometimes be a feeling of lack of fulfilment or realisation of full potential.

For example:

"It is assumed than men will want bigger and bigger jobs" but "women tend to be encouraged to apply for the smaller jobs because there is still a feeling amongst the hierarchy that women can't quite be trusted with the bigger jobs."

"Assumptions are made about what women will find difficult and are often protected from these situations rather than being given a choice."

Overall, the women seemed to be positive and hopeful about the church, as well as accepting how things were.

"It's necessary to live with the current reality but this has to be coupled with the importance of having vision, a sense of purpose, moving forward and dreaming dreams."

"We have to live with how things are but I want the church to change and the best way to do that is within an outward focused community."

"This vision and desire for growth, is about the working of God and God's Spirit among God's people which leads to an increased sense of love for God and others, and is ultimately about the hope of glory dwelling within to transform lives."

It appeared that they could hold together, "contentment" about their ministry as women in the church, as well as a desire to see the church change and grow. A number of them described this tension as "uncomfortable" but that this made it obvious that "things had to change". Clearly therefore, they regarded this feeling of discomfort as motivating both in terms of "getting on with the job" and using any influence or authority they had to work to enable the church to "move forward."

As one woman expressed it, "You have to accept and understand the accept the reality as it is, even if you don't always like it, in order that you can realistically and hopefully engage with the slow process of change."

Two of the women, however, were rather more circumspect about the possibility of change per se and about whether change would actually bring all that the women hoped for in the church. So for example, the latter commented, "Part of wanting to change can also be a belief that the grass is always greener, this can lead to a discontent and never being satisfied with what one has got or achieved."

Most of the women felt that they were able to make "a bit of a difference" and could play some part of the church moving forward. However, one observed "... because we, as women, have been moulded and continue to work within existing, largely male church structures, I don't think as ordained women we can actually make that much difference."

The “change” that the women most wanted to see, indeed the primary reason cited for feeling “uncomfortable with how things were”, was that women could not yet be bishops; there was unanimous agreement that this impinged not only on their ministry but also on how they viewed the church at a national level. The women judge the diocese by how “inclusive” they experience it to be in their particular role(s). Yet despite a current reality which did not include women bishops they generally seemed to be willing to live with the messiness, complexity and the big issues the church was facing as long as they perceived the church was “on a journey” and engaged in a process of, “learning, openness and maturity.”

Now and Ideal

The second method of analysing the results for this group of women incumbents returned to the thirteen key themes identified and compared how the women perceived their situations *now* with what they hoped for in their *ideal*.

There were five themes identified where the now and ideal were very similar:

Collaborative working

Developing new patterns of ministry (v Living with inherited patterns)

Being prepared to take risks

Being a public figure in the community

Having an impact on changing people's lives for the better

It would appear that within their parish contexts the women are confident within their roles, willing to take risks, able to exercise some autonomy in terms of how they work and feel that they are able contribute positively within the community.

More of a difference between now and ideal was revealed in the four themes that were to do with themselves as people in their roles and to what extent they were able to be outward focused.

The themes here were:

Being able to be the person, I really am in role

Being able to be outward focused

Moving forward (v Stagnating)

Giving of myself to God

Three themes reveal differences that are more marked:

Being affirmed in your role

Having the ability to influence change

Working with things as they are

However, the greatest discontinuity between now and ideal was the theme:

Being seen as a priest rather than as a woman priest

Although within their parishes women seem to be getting on with things and perceive that they have some impact, it appears that at a wider level, even within the diocese, they are hoping for more affirmation in their roles and more evidence that they are having some impact. Whilst they feel "comfortable" with things as they are, they would ideally like to be more "uncomfortable." Maybe they feel they should be rather less compliant and stir things up a bit but do they need first to feel more affirmed and confident in their ability to effect change?

Most significantly, women clearly want others to see them as priests rather than as women priests; yet, as we shall see in the next section of these results, when asked to rank the themes in order of importance they push it to the bottom of their priorities. Why might the women do this? Is it because they just feel they have to get on with the reality of the situation, whether they like it or not? If so, one has to wonder at the cost of such suppression.

As has been noted, the women, both in their jobs and as ordained women are positive about their ministries, however, their feelings are more mixed, in relation to the diocese and somewhat negative in relation to the church as a whole. The only exceptions to these are that they regard the church as having more impact on changing people's lives for the better than does the diocese. They are also more concerned about being seen explicitly as women priests within the diocese than by the church, perhaps because the church is seen as being more impersonal.

Overall, there is a gap between how women see the diocese now and how they would like it to be. However, there are a few areas where the reverse is true. For example,

the diocese sees the women as priests and affirms them as persons in their roles. It seems therefore that particular supportive relationships within the diocese (for example, archdeacon or diocesan officer) enable a number of the women to view the diocese in a somewhat more favourable light. Perhaps this more personal connection to the diocese explains why when the women are seen explicitly as women priests rather than priests it has more of a negative impact on them. However, somewhat ironically, the results also indicate that the women regard the diocese as being unaware of how important this issue is to them.

There is quite an overlap between how the women understand their roles and how they think the diocese sees them. However, the women believe that the diocese underestimates the extent to which they want to work more collaboratively, develop new patterns of ministry and are prepared to take risks.

Generally, it appears that even though most of the women report that they are, "getting on with things", they describe themselves as being, "uncomfortable" with how things are now and hope that things will change in order for them to feel really comfortable in their jobs and ministries; they believe that the diocese and the church are too complacent.

Rankings and Ratings

Thirdly, the results explored the relative importance of each of the thirteen key themes. To do this the women ranked the themes in order of importance for themselves and for how they perceived them to be for both the diocese and the church.

The three most important themes identified by the women were:

Giving my best to God

Being able to be the person, I really am in role

Having an impact on changing people's lives

Whereas the three least important themes were:

Being a public figure

Working with things as they are

Being seen as a priest rather than as a woman priest

One of the things that emerges from the women's rankings of the key themes for themselves is that the most important three themes (indeed the first six themes), seem to cluster around issues that the women have significant influence over as a people. In contrast, the least important themes identified are about the things over which they perhaps have less personal control. Although all the themes are important, it appears that the priority for the women is focusing on their relationship with God. Maybe as long as they recognise themselves as having some influence on changing people's lives for the better, they are rather less concerned with how they are perceived publicly, or that they regard this as something over which they have little influence.

Another significant thing, which clearly supports the results in the previous section, is that being seen as priests (rather than as woman priests) is again at the bottom of their list of priorities. They seem to regard this as relatively unimportant in relation to their overall role, and/or, appear to view it as something over which they have very little control.

In addition, as we shall see, when we explore what the women identify as being most and least important for the diocese and the church, the women regard gender as being relatively unimportant. Once more, one has to ask what might be the impact for these women, who although clearly would rather be seen simply as priests with no reference to gender, perceive this as being bottom of the list of priorities, not only for themselves but also for the institution for which they work.

The three most important themes, as identified by the women, for the diocese were:

Develops new patterns of ministry

Is moving forward

Has an impact on changing people's lives for the better

The women perceived the three lowest ranked themes for the diocese to be:

Is prepared to take risks

Enables me to be really the person I am, in role

Sees me as a priest

The three most important themes, as identified by the women, for the Church of England were:

Has an impact on changing people's lives for the better

Develops new patterns of ministry

Is outward looking

The women perceived the three lowest ranked themes for the Church of England to be:

Enables me to be really the person I am, in role

Sees me as a priest

Affirms me in my role

Clearly here, there is a fair degree of overlap between the results for the diocese and the church. Yet again, there seems here to be an emphasis on the highest ranked themes being more institutional and the lowest ranked ones being personal. It is interesting though that the diocese is believed to perceive "risk taking" to be marginally less important than it is for the church (where it came 10th). One hypothesis might be that it is more significant, in terms of things "moving forward", for the church to take risks, than it is the diocese.

Similarly, "developing new patterns of ministry" is regarded as being important for both the diocese and the church, whereas for women this is ranked 9th, suggesting once again that new patterns of ministry are more likely to be effectual if they are pursued as priorities for the institution rather than the individual.

Once more, the women relegate, "being seen as a priest" to the bottom, as being of least importance.

The women's lowest ranked themes for the church focus around role and priesthood. This seems to suggest, given the women are generally positive about their role as ordained ministers that, it is in spite of, rather than because of, any particular support or affirmation they receive in their roles.

Aside from the theme about having an impact on changing people's lives for the better, the issues perceived by the women to be important to them personally, they do not

regard as being important to the church generally. This is demonstrated by the two themes of giving myself to God and being able to be who I am as a person, in role, which are ranked very highly by the women but for the church were ranked 7th and 11th respectively.

Before we attempt to draw some conclusions from this study, it is worth noting there were four themes that appeared more than once; we will now look briefly at each of these.

The theme about, "being able to be the person, I really am in role", occurs three times; appearing in the top three for the women themselves but in the bottom three for both the diocese and the church. Although the women seem to feel consider this important for themselves, they perceive it to be relatively unimportant for the institution for which they work. However, the extent to which the women feel they can, "be the people they really are", is far from their ideal but they feel that the diocese and church do very little to help them with this.

Another theme that appeared three times was, "having an impact on changing people's lives for the better". In this instance, however, the women viewed it as important for themselves, the church and diocese. The women felt positive about the impact they were able to have on people's lives; for them, this is about prioritising personal relationships and the fulfilment they experience in their roles. A closer look at how the women rate this theme for the church and diocese reveals although ideally this should be important, the current reality is that they view the church and diocese as having very little impact on changing people's lives. They do think, though that the diocese perceives them as being able to have an impact on change people's lives.

"Being seen as a priest" also occurs three times. On this occasion, however, it is in the bottom three for the women themselves, the church and the diocese. This is a significant result because although other people (including the diocese), mostly see the women in their roles, as women priests rather than just priests, this is the complete opposite of how ideally, they would like to be viewed. The issue was raised spontaneously by each of the seven women in the in-depth interviews, so it is obviously important, yet it seems it is one that often subsumed by the women in the reality of ministerial life. However, the women also reported that "significant people"

in their lives (family and friends), see them primarily as "a person" who happens to be a priest, and that, to some extent, seems to mitigate how they are seen by others in their roles.

The final theme we will consider is around the, "development of new patterns of ministry" which is contrasted with the extent one is prepared to live with inherited patterns. This theme, which appeared twice, is in the top three for the church and diocese, whereas the women rank it 9th in their list of priorities. The women rank this theme low down their list of priorities, perhaps because they believe that they are already working towards developing new patterns of ministry. By contrast, although the women would like to see the church and diocese developing new patterns of ministry and they perceive this to be high on the list of priorities for both, they do not see any evidence of it happening at present. Therefore, although the women seem to be willing to develop new patterns of ministry, ultimately they believe it is the structures and organisation of the church and the diocese that need to change in order for real transformation to happen.

Conclusions from the MFS

We have explored the results of this first research study in three principal ways. Consequently, we have discovered something about how the key themes relate to each other, how the now and ideal connect with the themes, together with the relative importance of these themes. Therefore, we now draw some conclusions and identify the questions to take into the main piece of empirical research, focusing on women in senior leadership roles within the church. Once again, we use the three broad dimensions of person, process and context to present the conclusions, in order to provide continuity with the remainder of the thesis.

The women in this study closely connect their understanding of role and person; one woman gave the analogy of priesthood being like motherhood, going to the very essence of who you are and lifelong. Overall, they are *positive about their roles*, observing that they give a sense of, "wholeness", allowing them, "to be the person they really are". They would like, however, to see the church and diocese doing more

to affirm them, both as people, and in their roles. They also feel that the public perception of them is something over which they have little control.

Within the general church context, others clearly still see them as *women priests* rather than simply as priests. Although they really dislike the fact that gender is such a significant issue, they choose largely to put this aside in order to, "get on with things". They do feel though, that they "carry the weight" of "being the first woman to ..." In addition, they believe that the reputation for women's ministry "will be judged" by what they do, and that as women they should sometimes be "allowed to fail".

Even though the women believe that they have little ability to influence change, they do feel more confident that they can *affect people's lives for the better*. There was also some tension between whether they should be "comfortable" or "uncomfortable" in their roles. On one hand, they wanted to feel comfortable in their roles as ordained women but on the other, they recognised that being "uncomfortable" was a better catalyst for moving things forward. Perhaps one is to do with the reality of daily parish life and the latter about aspiration and hope for the future.

Overall, the women are optimistic about their ministries despite the perceived lack of support from the church and diocese. They are patient about waiting for change as long as they feel that, "things are on the move". *Developing new patterns of ministry* is something the women work hard at and they view this as something that should also be important to the church and diocese, although they see little actual evidence of this. The women recognise that structure and authority are necessary but within this context argue for appropriate patterns of ministry, which are compatible with the other roles women have.

Rather paradoxically, the women are clear about how the diocese views them but are not so sure, what they think about the diocese, although what is clear is that whilst they are rather ambivalent towards the diocese, they feel quite negatively about the church.

Although well aware that a desire to work collaboratively can sometimes, "cover up the absence of leadership", this is how all of the women chose to exercise their ministry. They feel that people, in the diocese (especially those in senior roles), are

unaware of the extent to which they want to work *collaboratively and are prepared to take risks*.

The change that the women most wanted to see, indeed the primary reason cited for feeling “uncomfortable with how things were”, was that they wanted *women's ministry to be considered normal*. In part, this is a concern about how the wider societal context regards the church. One woman's story illustrates this well. She related how her grown up son and daughter had reacted to the process leading to her to ordination. For her son the main issue was to do with "integrity", about the church practising what it preached. His concern was with what the outside world would think of the church. For her daughter the issue focused on valuing individuals, wanting the church to "progress" by enabling women to achieve and use their skills just as men are able to do.

The women were generally reasonably optimistic about *working within the structures*, as long as they felt the church was “on a journey” and engaged in a process that was *moving forward*. However, they realised that ultimately it was only by changing the institutional structures in the church that would enable new, more inclusive patterns of ministry to emerge.

The relationship with the diocesan bishop was central to how the women related to the diocese and wider church structures. Connected to this was their unanimous assertion that the fact that women could not yet be bishops impinged on not only their ministries but also how they viewed the church at a national level.

In light of Synod's recent rejection (in November 2012) of the legislation to allow women to become bishops, it would be interesting to discover now how this group of women incumbents felt about the church being on a journey. Looking at the comments expressed at the post synod meeting with the bishop, mentioned in the introductory part of this chapter, would suggest that for many of the women the vote has had a profound impact on how they view their own ministry, how they think about the church and what value the church places on their ministry as women.

By exploring how a group of women incumbents construe their ministry, we have identified a number of important issues and questions. These have helped us begin to explain why so few women apply for senior positions in the Church of England, from one side, that of curates and incumbents who might go on to those senior roles. In chapter 3 we will return to the issue from the viewpoint of those who are already in senior roles, to discover something about, how they got there, why they applied, what they found once they got there and how they inhabit their roles. We do that under the main question for the RBT:

How do women in senior positions in the Church of England construe their leadership?

However, before we look at the results from that major piece of empirical research, we need first to turn our attention to Personal Construct Psychology. For it is this that underpins the methodology used in both research studies and central to this is a more thorough understanding of what is meant by construe.

Chapter Two

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Empirical Research Methodology

Following the "spiralling approach" adopted by George Kelly as he outlines the theory and practice of Personal Construct Psychology (1991, p.xiv), this chapter begins that spiral by first addressing what might be meant by "construe", a key term used in both studies. We then look at some rationale for the methodology, as well as a brief overview of the theory of Personal Construct Psychology. Once the theoretical context is established, the remainder (and largest part) of the chapter explores the practice of Personal Construct Psychology, in relation to the two empirical research studies.

What does it mean to construe?

In both research studies, the use of the term 'construe' is deliberate. Whereas, the use of the term 'construct' can imply something in the process of construction, it can also mean something more fixed or cognitive. The most common understanding of construe, however, is as a verb, implying something ongoing or dynamic.¹¹

Construe or construing invokes a number of different terms in its definition, such as, "meaning making", "appraising", "applying a theoretical framework", "ways of making sense of things", "having a perspective". Some of the words used in construing often have cognitive connotations because of the ways we deal with theoretical perspectives in our culture, although this is not the always case. For example, when we are talking about significant people in our lives we are more likely to use words that describe emotions or feelings (Walker, 1996, p.8). Kelly does not seem to make this distinction between cognition and affect but simply argues that construing, which encompasses both, is part of what it means to be human. It does not matter whether or not these constructs can be clearly expressed to ourselves or other people, what matters is that we are continually trying to make sense of our lives. We do not therefore just 'react' to things that happen but rather we try to 'locate' them relative to other experience we have had (op. cit., p.23).

¹¹ As an example, Micah 6:8 describes what God requires of us, "*to do* justice, and *to love* kindness, and *to walk* humbly with your God" (NRSV); here we can view justice, kindness and humility as constructs, and *the doing*, *the loving* and *the walking*, as describing the practice and process of living these things, that is, as construing.

Kelly (1991) himself also comes to a definition of construing from a number of different angles. Here are just two:

“By construing we mean 'placing an interpretation': a person places an interpretation upon what is construed. He erects a structure, within the framework of which the substance takes shape or assumes meaning” (p.35).

“... an individual’s process of distinguishing things and events. Such distinctions group events together according to similarity and dissimilarity and thus allow a person to find his bearings in the world” (p.38).

Construing then is a process; the practice of making sense or making meaning of the things, people and events that make up life. Although this can mean different things for different people, it is something that we all do as part of being human. How we construe will profoundly affect how we behave for, as Fransella observes, “... how we construe an act, person, place or thing determines how we behave in relation to that act, person, place or thing” (1972, p.69). This is not dissimilar to Pattison’s argument, in his discussion about the use of behavioural sciences in pastoral studies, that how we think or understand ourselves and our worlds will have profound implications for how we behave and what we do (2007, p.253).

It is also important here to define what the term 'construct' might mean, as it is a key term both in Personal Construct Psychology as a theory, and in trying to come to a definition of construe. For Kelly (1991), a construct is a 'representation' created by a person and tested against the reality of their lived experience (p.9) or, in other words, 'interpretations' of factual material (p.94). What is crucial here is the act of construing itself so, as Fransella et al., emphasise,

“... we have been talking ‘as if’ there is a thing which is ‘a construct’ ... What we are talking about is the *process* of construing, which consists of the application of personal constructs we have each created during our lives and which are formed into our personal construct system” (2004, p.7).

The underlying belief that Kelly has of 'person as scientist' and his assumption that to be human involves ongoing change, mean that we will continually be testing out our constructs about each other and the world.

In addition, it is also important to be aware that constructs are bipolar, have a range of convenience (relevant to the situation under discussion) and exist within a construing system. For example, the constructs that occur in these research studies, only give a small glimpse into the constructs used by each of these women generally (Fransella et al., 2004, p.17). We therefore make sense of our experience with a system of categories, whereby we put constructs in the context of, and in relation to other things and events.

In the main RBT study, therefore, it is possible to regard 'leadership' as the primary construct and what we are attempting to do is to look at the practice and process by which these particular women in senior roles in the Church of England are making sense and making meaning of their leadership roles.

Rationale

There were a number of reasons for using Personal Construct Psychology, specifically in the form of a Repertory Grid, as the basis for the empirical research.

In professional practice as a psychologist, I had experience of using it successfully both as part of a research process and with people who were working through particular issues. It was something I wanted to explore and develop further as a methodology for addressing issues in ministerial practice.

In addition, I believed that the interview/questionnaire format would not only be familiar to the women but would also be able to be used in a way that was sensitive, flexible and provide, "structured data which facilitates analysis and interpretation" (Fromm, 2004 p.7). It was important, as well, to feel that one was able to get, "to the heart of the matter", to discover significant issues and attitudes, and to find out something about the relative weight with which people held the things that they considered important.

Personal Construct Psychology has a holistic, dynamic and hopeful view of the person as someone whose "free will"¹² enables them to try continually to understand and make meaning of their worlds (Butt and Burr, 2004, p.7, 34). This process of change is encouraged by enabling people to find new ways of looking at old problems (Fransella, 2005, p.106), and applies as much to the researcher/therapist as it does to the client. What these studies attempt to do therefore is not simply to gather information about these women as ministers and leaders, but to discover something about how they make sense of and create meaning in their roles.

Given that, women's ministry is still not entirely 'normal' and that there are relatively few women in senior roles in the church, it was important to listen to the women in the research in a way that honoured their experience. One of Kelly's principal assertions, "man as scientist", he places within the context of the "priesthood of all believers" (1991, p.4). Thus, the responsibility for "making meaning" rests with the client themselves rather than the therapist. The therapist (or the researcher) acts more like a facilitator, rather than an "expert" who holds the answers (or even the hypotheses).

Using Personal Construct Psychology therefore is a good way of honouring and taking the experiences of the women seriously. It can, "produce data without observer bias" and allows the interpretation of data in its own terms rather than in terms of someone else's theoretical framework (Stewart and Stewart, 1980, p.95).

It also addresses anxieties around the "validity of experience" (McClintock Fulkerson, 1994, p.50ff), in that it does not just listen uncritically to experience, but rather explores the meaning attached to the experience and uncovers the underlying values that people hold to be important. Thus while experience is allowed its own integrity, at the same time one is asked to look critically at the experience in order to make meaning.

Taking account of context is also important for Kelly. He suggests that when people identify constructs, or use particular words to talk about something, we need to look beyond the words and heed the context, "... to provide us with an understanding of his

¹² Kelly, 1991, p.14ff

outlook which no dictionary could offer" (1991, p.189). For example, in this research the word "freedom" frequently occurs. Sometimes this is about having the freedom, or not, to fail; at others, having the freedom to think about vocation; and, sometimes the extent to which, one can "do things differently", "be oneself", or challenge the structures but remain within them.

In contrast to Bevans who argues for the 'necessity' of context in doing theology for various external reasons (e.g. historical events, cultural and political changes) and their consequent internal impacts on Christian faith itself (2006, p.9), Kelly emphasises the 'usefulness' of context in providing information and understanding.

Personal Construct Psychology in theory

George Kelly first outlined his theory of Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) in two volumes, *The Psychology of Personal Constructs* in 1955. Kelly's basic proposal is that things that happen only have meaning, "in relation to the ways that are construed by individuals" (Cohen et. al., 2000, p.337).

Kelly recognised that, in his theory, many of the "familiar landmarks of psychology" would be missing, for example, there is no reference to terms like learning, emotion, motivation, unconscious etc. In contrast, other words such as guilt, role, hostility have rather "unexpected" meanings. Kelly rejected both behaviourism and psychodynamic approaches, believing that we are neither "a passive respondent to the internal unconscious forces" nor a "passive respondent to environmental events" (Fransella and Neimeyer, 2003, p.25; Bannister, 2003, p. 34).

The first volume of *The Psychology of Personal Constructs* begins with Kelly's basic philosophical position and contains most of his theoretical work, volume 2 focuses on the use of the psychology of personal constructs in a clinical setting and Kelly describes this as somewhat "folksy" reading. The two volumes follow a spiralling approach with theory interspersed with practical applications, returning in the second volume to a "further exposition of the more detailed aspects of the theory" (Kelly, 1991, xi-xv).

George Kelly was born in 1905 on a farm in Kansas. He grew up in a Presbyterian background but as an adult became a Quaker. His theory reflects his eclectic interests and experience, studying initially for a career in engineering before moving into

educational sociology and psychology. The development of his theory and in particular the repertory grid is testimony to these earlier interests (Fransella and Neimeyer, 2003, p.22/26).

John Dewey, both as a pragmatist and religious thinker influenced Kelly (Butt, 2003, p.379). Together science and religion were important to Kelly in understanding and making sense of the world and he clearly had familiarity with the Bible. He focused, however, on the social and moral aspects of religion rather than on truth claims (Warren, 2003, p.394). For example, he believed that the creation story in the Bible illustrated the pursuit for humankind to take on the responsibility of gaining knowledge of good and evil and that settling for, "ready-made answers" would negate that "quest" (op. cit., p.390). Kelly emphasised "the human potential to live boldly and unconventionally, by audacious experimentation rather than blind faith in authority"(Fransella and Neimeyer, 2003, p.26).

Kelly was above all things reflexive, "to the point of both boldly announcing and then questioning his own life work" (op. cit., p.24). He was able to shift from a breadth of vision to close attention to detail, believing that people were able to make their own choices and be in control of their own lives.

Kelly's theory, outlined here, from the 1991-reprinted edition of *The Psychology of Personal Constructs. Volume one: Theory and personality*, initially written for his students, in a clinical setting, is perhaps more for the specialist. However, Personal Construct Psychology and its use, is explored as one of the research methods outlined by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) in Chapter 19 of their book *Research Methods in Education*; and as Kelly himself asserts, all that is required is:

"... an adventuresome soul...who dares peer out at the world through the eyes of strangers ... who is looking for an *ad interim*, rather than an ultimate, set of psychological insights. He may earn his living as a psychologist, an educator, a social worker, a psychiatrist, a clergyman, an administrator ..." (1991, p.xii).

Kelly outlines his theory in a number of fundamental postulates and corollaries, which he helpfully summarises in the first chapter of the *International Handbook of Personal Construct Psychology*. In this, he firstly outlines his basic philosophical position, that of "constructive alternativism" which is, "... contrasted with the prevalent

epistemological assumption of 'accumulative fragmentalism', which is that truth is collected piece by piece" (in Fransella, 2003, p.4). This was not only one of Kelly's most profound insights but also a revolutionary alternative to the primary scientific methods used in the psychology at that time (Chiari and Nuzzo, 2003, p.42).

Essentially, "constructive alternativism" means that whatever events we encounter in our daily lives, we will try to construe, to the best of our ability at that time. Butt and Burr give another useful definition:

"The stance of constructive alternativism makes us recognise that it is always possible - if not always easy - to find different perspectives on the things that have happened to us" (2004, p.100).

This does not mean that there is no such thing as truth, nor that one construction is as good as any other, but rather it leaves open the possibility that our present perception of reality is always open to transformation.

Kelly states that his theory of constructive alternativism begins with the amalgamation of two ideas:

"... first, that man might be better understood if he were viewed in the perspective of the centuries rather than in the flicker of passing moments; and second, that each man contemplates in his own personal way the stream of events upon which he finds himself so swiftly borne" (1991, p.3).

In this opening paragraph, he emphasises therefore not only the importance of tradition and context, but also the value of people themselves in reflecting on their own lives. It is this understanding of people that leads him to one of his basic underlying principles of "man as scientist". Just as with the Reformation development in thinking about of the "priesthood of all believers", he argues we are more than just biological organisms and that "... every man is, in his own particular way, a scientist" (op. cit., p.4). This is a clear two-way process for Kelly, for just as all people are scientists, so conversely all scientists are people (Bannister, 2003, p.35). Just as he outlines 'person as scientist' within an understanding of the priesthood of all believers, so Kelly's fundamental philosophical position of "constructive alternativism" occurs in the context of a discussion about "freewill" (Kelly, 1991, p.26/14). These two

examples, perhaps give us some insight into Kelly as a man, who is both a pragmatist and a man of faith.

Starting from the basic postulate of constructive alternativism and the idea that, “all thinking is based, in part on prior convictions ... and that man is gradually coming to understand it (reality/ existence)” (Kelly, 1991, p.5), the theory is expanded by the use of eleven fundamental tenets, or corollaries, which are drawn from this basic philosophical position. It is around these that theory and practice have been built (Fransella, 2003, p.9-16; Kelly, p.35-73). These eleven corollaries highlight a number of important ideas in PCP and Kelly discusses them in some detail.¹³

In summary, then, Personal Construct Psychology is about people who are themselves the 'scientists', seeking to understand, make sense of and push out the boundaries of their worlds by questioning and exploring. Constructive alternativism is about the importance of events, how people anticipate events and the meaning that people give to these events that make up daily life (Fransella, 2003, p.4). The theory of PCP is expressed in very abstract terms, with clearly stated assumptions, and thus it is not essentially dependent (or limited by) time or culture; it allows people to be different but can also say something about what groups of people may hold in common.

The particular meanings Kelly attaches to the terms "construct" and "element", enables the use of his theory in a practical sense. Cohen et al., note also that these two essential characteristics are always present when using PCP practically, "...constructs – the dimensions used by a person in conceptualising aspects of her world; and elements – the stimulus objects that a person evaluates in terms of the constructs she employs" (2000, p.338).

Constructs, then, are what we use to think about our everyday experience. The things that make up that experience - ideas, objects, people, values, events, organisations - are the elements. Each construct, Kelly argued, is bi-polar and can often (although not necessarily) be described with adjectives or phrases (Cohen et. al., 2000, p.338). This bi-polarity is extremely important as it helps give meaning to the construct. In the main research study, for example, two of the women came up with the theme of "critical

¹³ A summary of these can be found in Appendix A.

friend" but when they were asked to complete the construct by giving the opposite pole, one identified simply "critical" and the other, "accepting friend". The meaning of critical friend thus has two different meanings; for one it is positive and for the other, negative.

As someone who is primarily interested in transforming practice, Kelly reminds us that the theory should act as a "tool", or a "framework" for producing new ideas (p.17), or interesting and useful truths that in turn may allow us to discover something about the real operating value systems that people hold. Therefore, although Kelly refers to his work as a, "theory of personality" (1991, p.2), it is perhaps unsurprising that it is more usually and accurately seen, not just as a model of personality but rather, as a "rigorous methodology" (Stewart, 2005, p.2).

Personal Construct Psychology in practice

The major part of this chapter, which we now come to, sets out the practical use of PCP in the two research studies. Common to both studies, we first consider the crucial matter of choosing the elements and eliciting the constructs, which will include discussion around "laddering". From this point onwards in the research, the use of the elements and constructs differed between the two studies. Consequently, we will return briefly to the Ministry Focused Study, the results of which are given in Chapter 1 and in detail to the main Research Based Thesis, to discover the specific use of the elements and constructs in each study.

It is possible for the researcher to choose the constructs themselves, perhaps based around a theme or centred on a hypothesis. However, as Fromm argues, to do that means you might not discover other characteristics that may be important to people, nor anything about the "concrete meaning" behind their choice, that is, what they might mean by a particular construct and why that construct is important (2004, p.15). It is therefore more usual (and more effective) to begin with the 'elements', the, "... objects of experience" (op. cit., p.19).

Choosing Elements

Elements can be chosen or elicited, and they can take many forms, such as situations, events, people and objects. They are the things or phenomena that make up our experience. One helpful way of identifying elements is to ask the question, "What am I trying to find out by using this grid?" (Fransella, 2003, p.45). Alternatively, as with any kind of research, "How am I going to evaluate my data, what I am going to do with the information when I have got it?" (Fromm, 2004, p.19).

Another crucial factor with regard to choosing elements is that they must be within the "range of convenience"¹⁴ of the constructs that will be used or elicited.

In the MFS, because I was trying to find out something about how ordained women in the Church of England construed their ministry, the elements I chose were around the 'role' of an ordained person and the church as an institution (including parish, diocese, Church of England). In addition, it is useful to have elements that are about future hopes as well as the current reality. In the analysis, it is then possible to compare the 'ideal' with all the constructs and elements.

The elements used in the MFS to elicit the constructs were as follows:

1. Me as an ordained woman
2. Me now in my job
3. My Diocese now
4. How I think my Diocese sees me
5. The Church as a whole now
6. My job as I would like it to be
7. My Diocese as I would like it to be
8. The Church of England as I would like it to be
9. Me as an ordained woman as I'd like to be

The elements used in the RBT appear later in this chapter but were around the theme of being a woman in a senior leadership position in the church. This included how they felt about their leadership personally and thought about it more widely, how they

¹⁴ This is the sixth of Kelly's 11 Corollaries (1991, p.48). See also Appendix A.

believed others would view a man in a similar position, and how those around them viewed their leadership.

In addition to the ideal, an element that asked them to look five years into the future was also included. It was possible then to compare this element with both the 'now' and the 'ideal'. The addition of this element was based on a hunch that five years may be a significant length of time both in the life of the church and in their personal development as leaders.

Eliciting Constructs

To elicit the constructs the elements are shown to the interviewee in some kind of systematic way. Once elicited the constructs (or meaningful themes) are put into a grid it can then be used to ask people to rate each element against each construct. Kelly (1991, p.112ff and p.152ff) identifies a number of ways in which one can elicit constructs, and these are summarised incisively by Fransella et al., including eliciting constructs from triads of elements (2004, p.27-28).

This process of 'triadic elicitation', where elements are presented in threes (triads), with at least one element in each triad being changed each time, picks up on one of Kelly's definitions of a construct as "... a way in which two or more things are alike and *thereby* different from a third" (op. cit., p.7).

There are no hard and fast rules as to how many triads should be presented but clearly one has to be pragmatic and with 9 or 10 elements, there are many different combinations. In these studies, after the presentation of about eight to ten triads the women began to identify repeated constructs.

The women were shown three cards with a separate element on each.

For example, one triad might consist of elements:

Me now as a leader (1)

How a man in the same job would be seen as a leader

How the Church of England sees me as a leader (6)

To elicit one pole of a construct, the women were asked, "Which two of these are the same in some way, and different from the third?"

Then they were asked, "What do the two have in common, as opposed to the third?" (Jankowicz, 2004, p.24).¹⁵

Constructs are bipolar and therefore it is only by having both poles that the construct has meaning. For example, in the MFS one of the constructs was, "being seen as a priest" but it was the opposite end of the pole, "being seen as a woman priest", that helps us to understand the meaning of the construct.

The aspect that the two have in common is one pole of the construct and the converse of this is the other pole. The verbal term applied to the converse end of the pole, is the opposite of the thing that two elements have in common and does not necessarily describe the element that was different.

In the elements given in the triad above, "Me now as a leader" and "How the Church of England sees me as a leader", could be seen as the same because they are both about "being autocratic"; that is one end of the construct. The opposite pole could be "being a weak leader" or "enabling consensus", as it was in this case. However, we cannot necessarily apply this opposite pole to the element that was different, in this case, "How a man in the same job would be seen as a leader".

Laddering

In addition to using triads to elicit constructs, a process called 'laddering' was used to try and further explore some of the constructs. Laddering, based on the work of Hinkle (1965) but perhaps most pragmatically described by Fransella, Bell and Bannister (2004, p.39), is a procedure which purports to elicit 'superordinate' constructs, that is, the underlying constructs (or important values) that the person holds.

The laddering process consists of taking a construct, asking people which side of the pole they prefer, then finding out why this is the preferred pole.

Using this preferred pole as one end of the next construct, the interviewee is asked for the opposite pole. The person is asked again which side of the construct they prefer and why, and so the process continues.

¹⁵ This process is particularly well described by Fromm (2004, p.20-24) and Jankowicz (2004, p.33-36, 108-109).

It is possible to ask the "why" question in a number of ways, for example:

“Why would you rather be ... than (opposite)?”

“Why is it important for you ...?”

“What’s important/ positive about ...?”

The table below illustrates a process of laddering with a construct elicited during an in-depth interview in the MFS.

Being perceived as a "scary" person v Being not very distinctive, a "cardigan"

Preferred Pole		Opposite Pole
Being perceived as a "scary" person.	v	Being not very distinctive/ interesting/ part of a crowd. A 'cardigan'.
↓		↓
Seeking attention. Extrovert. Enjoying being distinctive.	v	Bland. Don't rock the boat.
↓		↓
This is consistent with our role as priests. The role makes us distinctive anyway and as women we stand out.	v	Feeling uncomfortable being in role.
↓		↓
It's affirming getting positive feedback.	v	Being put down/ getting negative messages. Being ignored
↓		↓
So you know you are succeeding in your role and performing well.	v	Failing or messing it up.
↓		↓
Doing things well and succeeding is important to me personally.		
↓		↓
I'm an extrovert . I need external affirmation to feel good about myself and know I'm doing well.	v	Self contained
↓		↓
Fulfilling potential to be the person I am created to be.	v	Black spiral of depression. Stop functioning.

The process for choosing elements and eliciting constructs was the same for both studies, however, once established they were used in slightly different ways. We now look at the studies separately to describe two examples of using PCP in practice.

Ministry Focused Study (MFS)

The first study began with seven in-depth interviews using the nine elements around the role of an ordained person and the church as an institution. In view of the fact that my potential research group of 18 was relatively small, the only "useful" variable was possibly going to be those that had some sort of diocesan role as well as being incumbents and those that did not. Of the seven in-depth interviews, three of the women had some sort of diocesan role and four did not, which seemed to be an accurate representation of the whole group.¹⁶

A process of triadic elicitation and laddering elicited a large number of constructs from each of the women in the seven in-depth interviews. I decided to use the element, "Me as an ordained woman", as a common element in the triads because this was central in trying to discover something about how these ordained women construed their ministry.

The seven women involved in the in-depth interviews identified over 250 constructs between them. With the help of an independent assistant (who understood the methodology but did not come from a church background), the 250 constructs were pooled and then reduced to the 13 key constructs (or themes), identified in Chapter 1.

Repertory Grid Questionnaire

The primary application of the theory of Personal Construct Psychology, both in a clinical and research setting, is with the use of a Repertory Grid (Kelly, 1991; Cohen et al., 2000; Jankowitz, 2004; Fromm, 2004). A Repertory Grid is simply a blank matrix with *element(s)* along the top and *constructs* down the side. The grid is completed by "rating" (often from 1 to 7), each of the elements in relation to the constructs.

The process of construct elicitation when interviewing in the initial stages helps, "...to discover the areas the questionnaire should cover and the best ways of expressing them on paper, (this)...usually shows up important areas that other techniques might miss" (Stewart and Stewart, 1980, p.89). The constructs are then able to be, "like a reference axis" in the questionnaire (Fransella et. al., 2004, p.3).

¹⁶ The wording of the elements deliberately use the word "job" rather than "parish" or "role". This was because a number of the women had diocesan responsibilities as well as being in charge of parishes, so their "job" was not just within the parish. I wanted them to think of their job as a whole, possibly combining a couple of different roles.

Thus, because of the in-depth interviews, I was able to design some grid questionnaires which, asked questions around the themes (constructs) that had been identified at this stage. I included one additional element, "Me as a person", as I felt I wanted to test out what might be some of the differences (or not) between personhood (both as an ordained woman and as a woman with a particular job) and role.

This resulted in ten grid questionnaires each with a different element at the top. The women rated (from 1 to 7) each of the thirteen constructs in relation to the element at the top. Fourteen out of the eighteen incumbents in the diocese in 2007 completed the grid questionnaires. The results of the study are given for the group as a whole.

On the following page is a blank grid questionnaire for the element:

Me now as an ordained woman

The other grid questionnaires are in Appendix B.

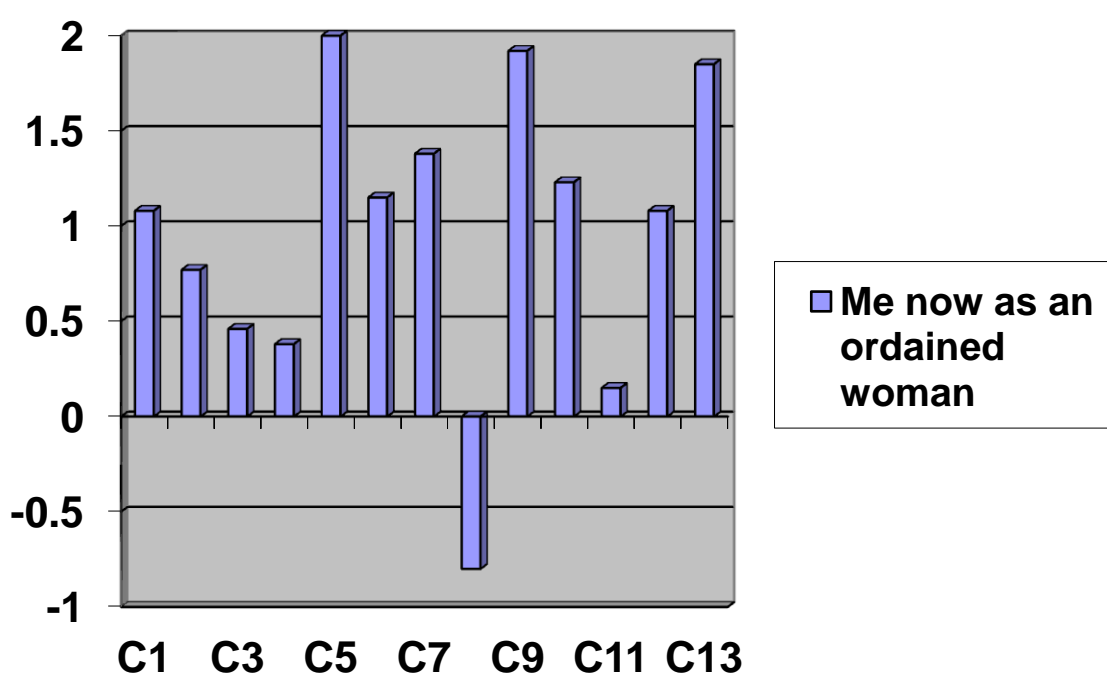
Me now as an ordained woman

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Unable to be the person I really am as an ordained woman								Able to be the person I really am as an ordained woman
Inward looking								Outward looking
Feel affirmed as an ordained woman								Do not feel affirmed as an ordained woman
Not much ability to influence change as an ordained woman								Ability to influence change as an ordained woman
Prefer to work collaboratively								Prefer not to work collaboratively
Prefer to work with inherited patterns of ministry								Prefer to develop new patterns of ministry
Prepared to take risks as an ordained woman								Not prepared to take risks as an ordained woman
Seen as a 'woman priest'								Seen as a priest
Feel comfortable being a 'public figure' within the community as an ordained woman								Do not feel comfortable being a 'public figure' in the community as an ordained woman
Moving forward								Stagnating
Comfortable working with things as they are								Uncomfortable working with things as they are
Able to give of my best to God as an ordained woman								Not able to give of my best to God as an ordained woman
Able to have some impact in changing people's lives for the better as an ordained woman								Able to have little impact in changing people's lives for the better as an ordained woman

The results of the grid questionnaires can be analysed in several different ways to provide useful information.

For example, it is possible to compare each of the Elements with all of the Constructs.

This graph shows the element *Me now as an ordained woman* compared against all of the constructs. Construct 8, *Being seen as a priest v Being seen as a woman priest*, stands out clearly as the construct that the women were most negative about in relation to themselves as ordained women.



The columns in the bar chart represent the deviation of each construct from the mean (average). If we take the example above, each of the women, when thinking about themselves as ordained women, rated construct 8, "Being seen as a woman priest v Being seen as a priest" from 1 to 7.

In a rating scale of 1 to 7, the middle number is 4. If a woman rates this construct a 3 it means that as an ordained woman they believe they are seen a bit more as a woman priest than simply as a priest. Statistically this rating would be counted as -1, as it is 1 less than the middle number. These deviations from the middle rating of 4 are added up and then divided by the number of women who rated the construct. In the graph above, therefore, the overall deviation from this middle rating is about -0.8. The numbers themselves are not important but what the graph clearly shows is that this is

the only construct rated negatively. It is obviously a significant result and highlights something that merits further investigation and comment.

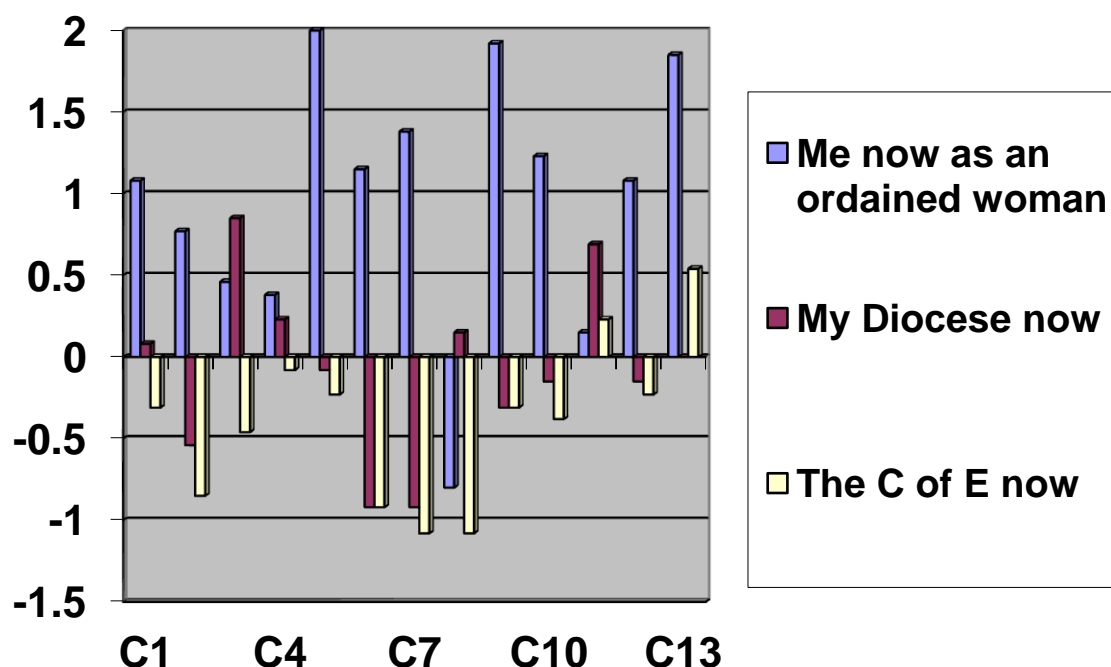
Likewise, it was possible to explore various combinations of elements. This graph shows the comparison of three elements, which illustrates something about how the women viewed their current situations.

Comparison of Elements: As things are now

Me now as an ordained woman

The Diocese now

The Church of England now



Overall, it is obvious that the women are happier about their present situation as ordained women than they are about the current reality in the diocese or the Church of England. They are also slightly more positive (or slightly less negative) about the diocese than about the church.

Although we must not read too much into the graphs per se, they do provide a very clear visual illustration, which combined with comments and quotes from the interviews, aid the analysis of the results and enable us to draw some conclusions with confidence.

In addition to completing the questionnaires, the 14 women also ranked the constructs in three ways:

In order of importance to themselves

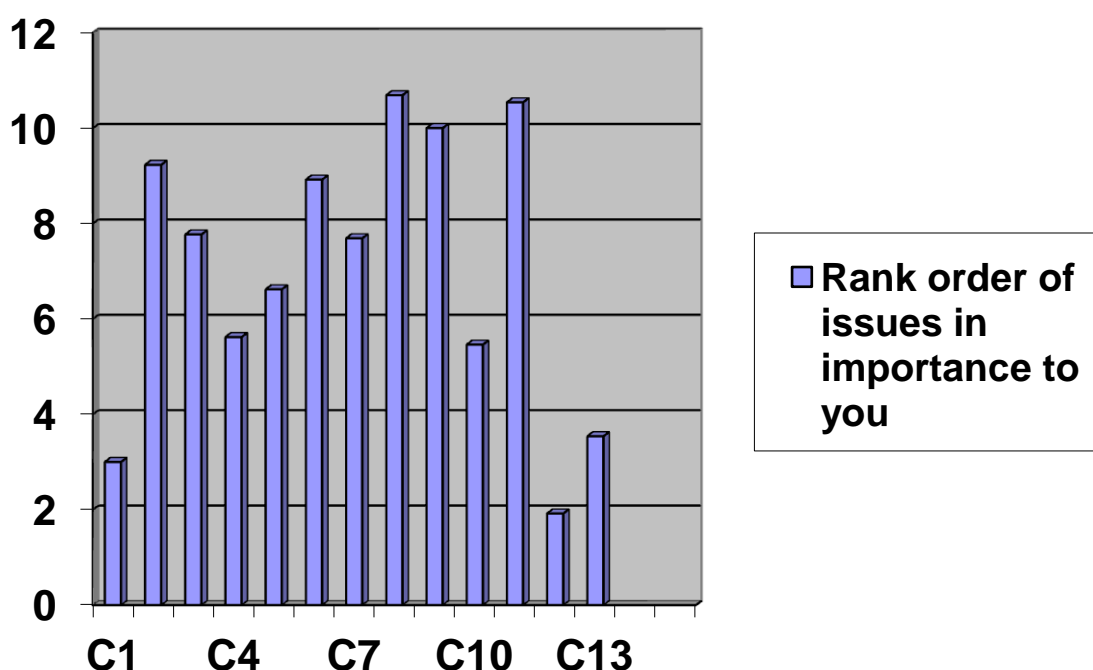
In order of importance, they think they are to the Church of England

In order of importance, they think they are for the diocese

Ranking is a difficult task, as all the constructs are important and meaningful to the women. However, it enables another layer of interpretation to take place, for example, by comparing these rankings with the ratings of the constructs and elements.

Prioritising the constructs in this way means it is possible to get more directly to the fundamental issues. It can also be informative to investigate the lower ranked constructs.

The following bar chart shows how the 14 women, as a group, ranked the constructs for themselves (1 is the highest to 13 the lowest).



The three highest ranked constructs are:

Giving my best to God (C12)

Being able to be the person I really am (C1)

Having impact on changing people's lives (C13)

The three lowest ranked constructs are:

Being a public figure (C9)

Comfortable/ Uncomfortable with things as they are (C11)

Being seen as a priest (C8)

As was noted in Chapter 1, the highest 3 (indeed the highest 6) constructs all seem to be about things that women have some influence over, whereas the lowest 3 are about the things over which they have less personal control.

Once again, another significant thing illustrated well in this bar chart is that, "being seen as a priest" (rather than as a woman priest), is clearly at the bottom. Although the women would clearly like others to see them just as priests, they view it as relatively unimportant in relation to their overall role.

The Research Based Thesis (RBT)

In December 2007, fifteen of the most senior women in the Church of England (Archdeacons, Cathedral Deans and Theological Educators) were invited, by letter (and email), to take part in this research. The letter contained an outline of the proposed research project and a reply slip, asking them if they would be willing to take part and how/ when they preferred to be contacted. In addition, each woman was also sent a *Self Characterisation* sheet.¹⁷ They were asked to write something about themselves in their role as a woman in a senior position in the Church of England. They were advised not to spend too long on this and to write it in the third person, as if a friend who knew them well wrote it.

Six of the women returned these Self Characterisation forms and the remaining nine also responded in some form or other. Two stated they did not have time to take part in the study although one of these later did provide some brief information as well as engaging in some ongoing discussion in a number of emails. Twelve of the women agreed to be interviewed although in the end only 11 actually took part in the

¹⁷ Appendix C contains a copy of the initial letter sent to all the women.

structured interview (four of whom had also returned a completed Self Characterisation form).

Eleven structured interviews took place (mostly in the summer of 2008) which produced the following information/ data:

1. Constructs were elicited and put into a Grid that the women then completed with ratings from 1 to 7.
2. Some of the women also ranked the constructs in order of importance for themselves and for how they thought the Church of England would rank them.
3. Notes and quotes from the interview.
4. A biographical sheet with additional information about their role, for example, why they applied for their job and how it had matched their expectations of what the role would entail.
5. The women were asked to identify the things that helped and hindered them in their senior roles.

The results of the interviews were analysed using a computer programme called Grid Suite 4¹⁸ in the latter half of 2010. This data, information from the interview and other collective data was analysed and collated in the early part of 2011. Chapter 3 presents these results in the form of a mixture of individual Case Studies and collective data, which attempts to represent all the women involved in the research, as well as some exploration of the three different roles in the church that these 14 women hold.

Self Characterisation

In the early stages of contact with the women, each of them was given the opportunity to complete a very simple *Self Characterisation*, in order to begin to get a picture of how the women were construing, because as Denicolo observes, "Such sketches are replete with constructs..." (2003, p.125). The particular phrasing used in a Self Characterisation request stresses structure over detail, but at the same time indicates that some depth is required. Writing in the third person allows some objectivity that coupled with the instruction to be sympathetic, is intended to free people from either writing something self-deprecating or a list of "oughts".

¹⁸ Available online after application to Professor Martin Fromm, University of Stuttgart.

Example of the Self Characterisation Sheet sent to Keren

Please do not spend too long on this (15 minutes max.)

What I am hoping for is some initial thoughts/ hopes/ reflections/ comments rather than anything too polished.

Please write a character sketch of Keren in her role as a woman in a senior position in the Church of England, just as if she were the principal character in a play. Write it as it might be written by a friend who knows her very well indeed.

Please write it in the third person, so for example, begin by saying.....

Keren is....

If you want to add anything about how it felt to write this please do so here.

Thank you

Date

Self Characterisations can be analysed and scored, either in a systematic way such as that suggested by Feixas and Villegas (1991, p.51ff), or simply to identify some core perspectives (Butt and Burr, 2004, p.130-131).

In this study, although the Self Characterisations were put into categories using the method outlined by Feixas and Villegas, because of the brevity of the accounts, the primary focus was to give a fuller picture and to discover something about the “tone and flavour” (Butt and Burr, 2004, p.131) of how the women were construing.

Although a number of the women said they found completing the sheet “uncomfortable”¹⁹, they also commented that it had made them think more explicitly about their leadership and about how they were perceived (and had received feedback) as leaders by others.

It also seemed to have allowed the women to respond creatively, honestly and maybe in a rather different way, to the frequent questions they are asked about leadership, given the few numbers of women in such senior leadership positions in the church.

Denicolo also observes how using Self Characterisations can mitigate against the rather “self-conscious and sanitized” responses that sometimes occur when you ask people to provide information about themselves (2003, p.125).

As the Self Characterisations were received before the interview, it enabled the interviewer to have some idea of the context and the sorts of issues that may be raised in the course of the interview. However, the accounts were not analysed before the interview, as it was felt that it would be best to go into the interview with as few preconceptions / assumptions as possible.

Retrospectively, it may have been interesting to have done some analysis pre-interview and then for the constructs and elements identified in the Self Characterisation to be used in the grid. This would have been somewhat of a risk as, at that stage, it was unclear how useful the information would be, given the brevity of the accounts. The time available with each woman was also relatively limited and

¹⁹ Interestingly, one of the women (Abigail) wrote two emails explaining, in some detail, why she did not have time to complete the Self Characterisation, although ironically, the length of these emails exceeded the length of the majority of the Self Characterisations that were returned to me *and* the emails themselves are open to textual analysis in a similar way. Naomi, the first woman to respond (and be interviewed), reported that she found it difficult to write what she wanted to say but was happy to dictate it over the phone; it seemed that for her, being able to talk about your strengths and weaknesses as a leader is one thing but committing it to paper is quite another.

needed to be used well. However, the analysis of the Self Characterisations was used as part of the totality of data acquired from each of the women, and it is hoped that this adds to the accuracy of the hypotheses produced.

As noted, Feixas and Villegas describe a method for identifying constructs and elements in autobiographical texts, which they then put in a matrix and use in a two-way cluster analysis to provide raw and computed data. However, for our purposes we are primarily interested in the first part of their study which attempts to identify constructs and elements and place them into three categories (1991, p.57-59). Therefore, if we take what Keren wrote in her Self Characterisation:

Keren is... *Someone who listens, relates well to wide range of people, is tougher than she looks, well respected, not afraid to confront those issues previously put in the "too difficult to handle pile". Keren is a woman who, "does God well", can think strategically; speaking of God and vision mean she will be perceived as a challenge or threat by some. Keren is comfortable with the breadth of Anglican church style, "an evangelical trying to get out", with commitment to the sacraments of historic Catholic spiritualities.*

Using this as an example, the three categories can be summarised as follows:

1. Evaluative-simple. This is where Keren attributes a personal characteristic to herself. For example, "Keren is someone who listens."
2. Meta-evaluative. This involves a perception of the use of a construct. For example, "Keren will be perceived as a challenge or threat by some."
3. Relational. Here this might mean what Keren understands of the relationships or connections between people. For example, "Keren is comfortable with the breadth of Anglican Church style."

Clearly, although the categorisation may be helpful in identifying the depth or complexity of a "construct", such an analysis often only gives one end (the emergent end) of a construct, and ideally therefore needs to be used as part of an ongoing discussion with a person in their identification of constructs. Therefore, in this study,

these "constructs" have primarily been used to confirm (or otherwise) the constructs identified during the interview.

However, this is not to deny the value of the Self Characterisations in giving a sense of a person's core perspectives. They enable others to see not only, "...how people view themselves but how they perceive the worlds they inhabit" (Deniclo, 2003, p.125). Self Characterisations tend to include significant descriptions that help distinguish oneself from others. As Kelly also observes, the opening sentence of a Self Characterisation gives a good idea about the person's view of self, the closing sentence provides an indication of where they think they might be going, and, finally, what is omitted is significant too (1991, p.247).

Repertory Grid Interview

Repertory Grids provided the main basis for the structured interviews in these studies. When Kelly produced his theory in 1955, he seemed to envisage the use of the Repertory Grid Interview primarily in a clinical setting where the therapist would use the grid to identify issues that were important to a particular client and develop hypotheses, using these in a continuing process of listening, talking and understanding (Kelly, 1991, p.128ff).

In this research, the grid interview has been used to provide a snapshot (albeit a very comprehensive and representative one), of how these women in senior posts construe and think about their leadership. It is easy to see how this methodology might be used as part of an ongoing process of mentoring and development. However, even when there is limited scope for a "continuing conversation", grid questionnaires (as used in the MFS) and grid interviews are useful. Grid interviews based on elicited constructs ensures that you have addressed the issues of those being interviewed and the, "knowledge that you have probed as deep as you can so you will not have left much out" (Stewart and Stewart, 1980, p. 94).

Richard Bell is one of the few practitioners who makes the connection between the theory of PCP and the use of repertory grids explicit. He reminds us that Kelly's Fundamental Postulate says that a *person's processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which they anticipate events*:

"The *ways* are the constructs of a repertory grid, and the *events* are the elements. The technique of the repertory grid thus involves defining a set of elements, eliciting a set of constructs that distinguish among these elements, and relating elements to constructs" (2005, p.67).

By contrast, Fromm simply refers to the repertory grid as a form of "structured interview". He also observes that although Kelly devotes less than a tenth of his work to the discussion of the "Repertory Test", it has become by far the most frequently used technique, by people from a wide range of disciplines. He makes the case for grids by arguing for their usefulness in providing "structured data" as well as being enabling exploration into people's "personal and subjective worlds" (2004, p.7). We need to hold both these perspectives in view. Fromm's work makes the repertory grid accessible to a wide range of practitioners, which is perhaps more in the spirit of Kelly, however, if we fail to understand the connection between the theory and the use of such grids, then we are in danger of losing some of the richness of the quantitative and qualitative information that they can produce.

Using a Repertory Grid as a form of structured interview in this research proved beneficial in a number of ways and was a familiar format for all those involved. It revealed something about people's subjective views of leadership in a way that enabled one to get to important issues and be able to find out something about the relative weight with which people held these things. In addition, it provided useful data that could engage with both the narrative and the facts of people's lives.

The elements that were used in the grid (and which later the women would be asked to rate from 1 to 7 against each of their constructs) were:

1. Me now as a leader
2. Me ideally as a leader
3. How the Bishop sees me as a leader
4. How staff/ Chapter/ clergy see me as a leader (depending on the particular role)
5. How a man in the same job would be seen as a leader
6. How the C of E sees me as a leader
7. How I would like to be seen by the C of E as a leader

8. Me as a leader in five years' time
9. A leader from the Bible/ Christian tradition (they were asked to identify someone)
10. How lay people see me as a leader.

Unlike the MFS where all the women were based geographically in one diocese, the women in this research came from 14 different dioceses spread all over England. The nature of these women's roles also meant it was only possible to see each woman once (for about 2 hours). In addition, the 14 women had three distinct roles in the church, with two of the roles, Cathedral Dean and Theological Educator, held by only two women in each role. Given the very small sample, it was felt that the data would be more useful if there was a focus on the women individually rather than as a group. Therefore, although the elements were used to elicit constructs in the same way as for the MFS, the constructs were not pooled to produce grid questionnaires for the whole group but were used to create an individual structured "grid interview" for each woman.

Each of the women therefore elicited an individual set of constructs from the elements. These constructs were put into a grid, and the women were asked to rate each of the elements against their constructs. So that not all the positive poles are at the same end the constructs are deliberately mixed up. The rating scale was from 1 to 7. Usually the "ideal" element will contain mostly (or all) 1's and 7's.

An example of a completed Grid (Hannah)

	Me now as L	Me ideally as L	Bishop sees me as L	Clergy see me as L	Man in same job	C of E sees me as L	Like to be seen by C of E	Me as L in 5yrs	L from Christian tradition	Lay people see me as L	
1											7
Self in role	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	3	Mask in role
Easily managing public role	6	7	7	5	3	2	2	1	7	2	Courage in managing public role
Potential realised	2	1	3	2	4	2	1	1	2	3	Frustration
Agent of change	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	Stick in the mud
Collaborative	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	2	Static & Individual
Structures	5	7	5	5	3	3	7	6	5	3	People at centre
Dysfunctional relationships	7	7	7	7	4	7	7	7	7	7	Integrity in relationships
Mismatch in perception	7	7	7	5	5	6	7	7	7	5	Close fit in perception
Strategic	1	1	1	1	4	2	1	1	1	1	Immediate detail

Rather than going through a process of eliciting constructs, it is possible carry out a repertory grid interview either with constructs chosen by the interviewer beforehand, or by allowing people to choose from a range of aspects considered the most crucial, or that fit most clearly with an interviewer's hypotheses. However, not only does this approach risk missing other characteristics that may be important to people, but it reveals nothing about the concrete meaning behind people's choice, that is, what they might mean by a particular construct and why that construct is important (Fromm, 2004, p.15). Moreover, it does not sit very comfortably with Kelly's belief that we are all scientists.

As well as completing a grid, notes were made during the interview which were written up immediately afterwards. This not only gave some additional qualitative data but also served as a double check for the grid. It is worth noting that the grid interview primarily produces a grid, rather than a verbatim account. Additionally, with the rating of key themes, or constructs against various situations, ideas and relationships, the results produced are rather different from a traditional interview. In the results, any

quotes reproduced in inverted commas, were noted verbatim and are in addition to the grid.

When the grid was completed most of the women also ranked their constructs in order of importance, both for themselves and as they perceived them for the Church of England as a whole. These rankings can be compared with the grid rating scores to ascertain the degree of importance of a particular construct in relation to an element. For example, a discrepancy between the "now" and "ideal" elements would be more of an issue for the person if the construct was ranked highly.

Some closing comments on methodology

Since its inception in 1955, George Kelly's theory of the Psychology of Personal Constructs has been used in a huge variety of different contexts and settings, ranging from the personal to those focusing on groups, organisations, politics and cross-cultural construing (Butt and Burr, 2004; Fransella, 2003).

There are, however, a number of issues, apart from the relative complexity of the theory, that need to be taken into consideration when using Personal Construct Psychology, particularly Repertory Grids, including the widening gap between the technical advances in analysing grids and the theoretical basis on which grids are based. Laddering also needs to be viewed as a skill that comes with practice, rather than an exact science; one must be careful not to impose constructs and make the assumption that a given construct will mean the same across all the elements.

Fransella and Bannister argue that the greatest danger of all is that because computers now mostly do the analysis of grids, this may lead to the increasing use of concepts to describe what is discovered, and from there, "it is a small step to these becoming traits" (cited in Cohen et. al., 2000, p.345). In other words, Repertory Grids can become a form of psychological testing rather than an exploration of meaningful themes or issues for the person involved.²⁰

²⁰ Butt and Burr also emphasise Kelly's belief that we should not look at people as a collection of traits, "...but rather in terms of the way we construe, i.e. the particular questions with which we approach our social world and the theories that each of us silently constructs about that world" (2004, p.35).

It is obviously important to be aware of these pitfalls and I have tried to address them as far as possible. For example, although I am a competent mathematician and have experience of dealing with various types of data, statistical and otherwise, for the results of the grid analysis I have only used that which sticks most closely to the raw data.²¹ Regarding the issues to do with the meaning of the constructs, my hope is that the addition of comments and notes made during the interviews, as well as the inclusion of the material written by the women themselves,²² would largely mitigate these problems.

The final danger mentioned is perhaps the prevalent. However, as long as due regard is given to this, the advantages of using Personal Construct Psychology and, in particular, the Repertory Grid with its richness of both qualitative and quantitative data, far outweigh the possible dangers. For, as Valerie and Andrew Stewart observe, Repertory Grid technique is able to “... produce data without observer bias ...” which consequently allows data (on a subjective topic), to be interpreted in its own terms rather than in terms of someone else’s theoretical framework (1980, p.95). There is an acceptance, and indeed an expectation, that events (or roles) will mean different things to different people, in a way that encompasses the whole person, their behaviours, values and experience. PCP has a vibrant and hopeful view of a person, which allows them the integrity to make sense of their own lives and world, assumes the possibilities of change and growth, and enables them to realise that it is always possible to find new perspectives.

In the following chapter, which forms the core of this thesis, we see how the use of PCP has indeed allowed us to discover some key insights into how these senior women in the Church of England construe their leadership.

²¹ For example, Keren’s Case Study in Appendix D shows the full range of analysis that is possible using the Grid Suite programme. Although this software was used to analyse all the grids, for the purposes of this study I have drawn only on the cluster analysis in the form of the Dendrogram, which illustrates the connections between the elements and constructs in the grid in pictorial form. For presentation purposes, the data in the grid is rearranged to show more clearly the links between the grid and the Dendrogram.

²² For example, the Self Characterisations, expectations about the role, Helps and Hindrances sheets etc.

Chapter Three

RESULTS

Results

This chapter contains most of the results of a major piece of empirical research using Personal Construct Psychology, involving 14 of the 15 women who have a strategic brief, in a diocese and/or more widely in the Church of England, in the roles of Archdeacon, Cathedral Dean and leaders of Theological Colleges. It is therefore the heart of the thesis. There are five sections in this chapter, with the first and last sections giving an introduction and conclusion to the chapter as a whole. The second section contains a detailed case study, section three provides a summary of each of the 14 case studies and the fourth section outlines the general collective data, further sub-divided into three parts. Firstly, a summary of the case studies looked at collectively, identifying common issues and themes. Secondly, a presentation about what the women believe helps and hinders them in their roles. Thirdly, we attempt to discover if there are any themes or emphases particular to each of the three roles of Archdeacon, Dean or Theological Educator.

Introduction

In addition to the three specific roles mentioned above there are, of course, other women in senior posts in the church. For example, those in Diocesan posts who carry particular responsibilities and Residentiary Canons. However, for the purposes of this research the focus was on those women who had responsibility for staff teams of one sort or another, and women, most clearly seen as symbolic by other women, either nationally or within a diocese. The bulk of the empirical research took place in the summer of 2008 when there were 15 women in these posts - 2 Cathedral Deans, 2 leaders of Theological Colleges and 12 Archdeacons.²³ One of the Archdeacons chose not to take part and a further one gave only minimal background information. Nevertheless, what we have here is a very comprehensive exploration of how these women in senior roles construe their leadership roles.

²³ Since this time, four more women have been appointed in the Church of England - two Deans and two Archdeacons. The Church in Wales has also now appointed its first woman Archdeacon and its first woman Dean (who resigned two months later in May 2013).

The women were invited to provide various kinds of information:

1. Biographical data.
2. Expectations and any other comments they wanted to make about how they inhabit their roles.
3. Identifying the things that helped and hindered them in their roles.
4. Leaders from the Bible or Christian Tradition that they found helpful.
5. A Self Characterisation.

In addition, the women were asked if they were willing to take part in a structured interview, identifying (and rating) personal constructs to produce a Repertory Grid.

Fourteen of the women provided the biographical data and made some comments about expectations and their roles in general. A further two provided this information plus a Self Characterisation and identified the things that helped and hindered them in their roles. Eleven of the women were interviewed, four of whom had also completed a Self Characterisation. To ensure confidentiality, as far as is possible with so few people, each of the 11 women was given a biblical name, so that they are "women" who have a voice.

The interview produced a grid that was analysed using a statistical programme called Grid Suite 4²⁴. This software produces statistical data (see Keren's Case Study in Appendix D as an example), which is useful if there is an ongoing conversation or involvement with a person. For the purposes of this research project, as well as the information from the interview itself, the focus was on the grid and the dendrogram²⁵, as these were the two analyses that stuck most closely to the raw data. Inevitably, because the results from both, the individual case studies and the collective data are presented in a number of different ways, there will of necessity be some repetition; this serves to enhance the validity of the data presented.

²⁴ Available online after application to Professor Martin Fromm, University of Stuttgart.

²⁵ A dendrogram chart shows how particular constructs cluster together with other constructs, and how (separately) elements cluster together with other elements.

During the course of this chapter we will see more explicitly how the three dimensions in our definition of leadership, that is, *context*, *process* and *person*, become increasingly evident in the experiences of the women in this study.

Detailed Case Study: Ruth

As space permits only one full case study, Ruth's was chosen to illustrate how each of the 11 case studies of the women who were interviewed was analysed. Ruth was one of the four women, whose case study provided a full set of information, including a Self Characterisation and an interview in which she also ranked her constructs. It is perhaps worth reiterating here that because the "interview" primarily produces a grid rather than a verbatim account, the results produced are somewhat different from a traditional interview. When quoting Ruth's words directly, either during the interview or from her written Self Characterisation and other information sheets, these are presented with speech marks.

We begin with the Self Characterisation that Ruth wrote.

Ruth ... *"enjoys being involved with a range of people, places, projects and likes to have plenty to think about, connections to make and new situations to get to grips with. She is hard-working and focused in these areas to which she feels a commitment. Although fairly accepting of the structures of the church she is not uncritical and is ready to voice her criticism which often leads to her feeling that she is an outsider. She is motivated by a desire to help people explore faith and by a concern for social justice and for the best possible development of the individual within any context. She has worked, and felt equally called and fulfilled, in the health service and in universities and does not see a call to ordination and service in the church as intrinsically different from the commitment made by many Christians to a sphere of service. Again, this leads to a feeling of being an outsider at times, but also to a sense of independence."*

It is possible to analyse the Ruth's Self Characterisation by placing each part of it in one of the three categories outlined by Feixas and Villegas (1991, p.57-58), so for example:

1. Evaluative-simple. In our context, this is where Ruth attributes a personal characteristic to herself. For example, *"Ruth enjoys being involved with a range of people..."*
2. Meta evaluative. This involves a perception of the use of a construct. For example, *"Although fairly accepting of the structures of the church she is not uncritical..."*
3. Relational. Here this might mean what Ruth understands of the relationships or connections between people. For example, *"She has worked ... and does not see a call to ordination ... as intrinsically different ..."*

If, however, we focus on key perspectives (Butt and Burr, 2004, p.131) and observe how the Self Characterisation begins, ends and what might be omitted (Denicolo, 2003, p.125), we get some additional insights. It seems that Ruth enjoys the variety, together with the resultant challenges, that she encounters in her role and that feeling called, fulfilled and committed is important to her. How she engages with the structures effectively is also clearly an issue for her but although she sometimes feels like an outsider, she appears to value the independence this brings; connected with this is that the church is not seen as being inherently differently from other places of work. Finally, and perhaps significantly, although she overtly mentions faith she omits any explicit mention of leadership. It is interesting to see how these same issues are identified again during the interview itself and in the resultant Repertory Grid.

Using the processes of Triadic Elicitation and Laddering as outlined in Chapter 2 Ruth identified ten constructs:

- C1 Affirmed as a leader v Criticised as a leader
- C2 Rejecting structures of the church v Prepared to work within the structures of the church
- C3 Determination v Flitting
- C4 Openness to what a leader is v Fixed expectations of what a leader is
- C5 Not explicitly seen as a leader v Clearly seen as a leader
- C6 Enables consensus v Autocratic

- C7 Stick in the mud v Breath of fresh air
- C8 Able to make a difference v Keeping things going the same
- C9 Good, realistic understanding of role v Lack of clarity about role
- C10 Critical v Critical friend

It is important to remember that each construct consists of both ends of the pole, so for example, although construct 2 is about the structures of the church and this is a significant theme for Ruth, we can only really understand the meaning of the construct by looking at the construct as a whole. If we do, we see that, for Ruth, the issue about structures is how to live with the tension that occurs between the two opposite ends.

The interview confirmed that Ruth was keen to learn about the structures of the Church of England but she highlighted the tension between showing you are prepared to work within the structures and yet also being willing to challenge - knowing when to keep quiet and when to speak up. She would like to be a "critical friend", rather than either just a "critic" or a "friend". Although she often feels very frustrated with the church, she wants to "stick with it" because she cares about it and wants to "make a difference". Ruth also asked a number of questions:

"The Church of England calls and ordains priests, to what extent is it looking for leaders? Are women developing new patterns of ministry or just demonstrating a lack of commitment? Women working in rural areas generally seem to be very well accepted, why are there not so many women in town or city centres?"

People like Rosemary Radford Ruether, Mary Magdalene and other women disciples who had the strength to keep going, in spite of the structures, inspire Ruth. She observes that a lack of clarity about one's role also cause stress and suggests that women are perhaps more willing to highlight the gaps, or at least are more aware of them.

Ruth's omission of leadership in the Self Characterisation was also discussed during the interview; she acknowledged that she was in a senior position but questioned the extent to which she was seen "as a leader" rather than being someone who is primarily seen "in role".

Ruth outlined both some of the advantages and the disadvantages of being amongst the first women to be in senior roles such as hers. The disadvantages included people watching carefully what she does and expecting her to do things in the same way as before, and that differences are noticed more. She believes that men, in the same role, can be unsure or make a mistake but because people are so used to men in these roles, "... they don't get noticed in the same way, as they get absorbed into the 'corporate role' of [male] archdeacon". She also wonders if women are less willing to bluff and therefore that their perceived lack of knowledge is more noticeable. The advantages for women, though, are that they have a bit more freedom to perform the role in their own way, although whilst women are still "learning" they have to conform. She also asks whether they are doing things differently because they are women, or because of personality, or because of a lack of understanding of the role generally.

Ruth observed that although many bishops (and other senior male leaders) like to appoint women and "have them there", they still seem to feel that it is much more "risky" to appoint them and that "their necks are on the line too". Ruth believes that the appointment of women to senior positions seems to need even more careful consideration by those in authority than the appointment of senior men. In addition, despite the fact that the bishop and other senior staff are keen to encourage women in ministry and into senior positions, they also continue to appoint men who are opposed to working with women with a lack of awareness of how such appointments will affect women.

Ruth often feels uncomfortable about the way in which other women are talked about in senior staff meetings. For example, "... wanting ministry to suit them ...", "... being not so committed because ...", "... maybe not quite ready to be ... [in a leadership role]". The experience of "her voice not being heard", compounds this, for example, she may suggest something at the beginning of a meeting that is not taken up, but when later in the meeting a man makes the same suggestion, "it will be approved". She summarised her thoughts thus, "I have a great sense of responsibility to encourage and support other women and to be proactive about the roles of women in society. However, I sometimes feel like doing something where my gender is less a subject of discussion!"

Ruth thinks that women are beginning to be able to "fail" (i.e. "not make a difference") and the consequences of that failure are certainly not as bad as in some organisations, for example, the health service. She believes that it is important that women, "unlearn their fear of failure which often comes with the expectations of being the first woman to ...". Having met some women business leaders, Ruth was interested to discover that they too were struggling with working patterns and other gender issues in their organisations. Generally, Ruth feels that she needs to be encouraged more as a leader, and allowed the freedom to discover what constitutes personal development as a leader, "along the lines of ... it's OK to be yourself and develop in a way that is best for the 'person' in role".

After identifying her ten constructs, these were put into a grid (see following page); Ruth then rated each one from 1 to 7.²⁶ One of the things that is unusual in Ruth's grid is that often the element *Me ideally as a leader* would contain mostly 1's or 7's. Although we will discuss Ruth's grid in more detail, following the picture of the dendrogram, which looks for connections between constructs and between elements, the analysis is possible to do by eye. This is done by comparing the ratings for a particular construct between various elements, for example, *now* and *ideal*, *now* and *a man in the same job*, *ideal* and *5 years time* and so on.

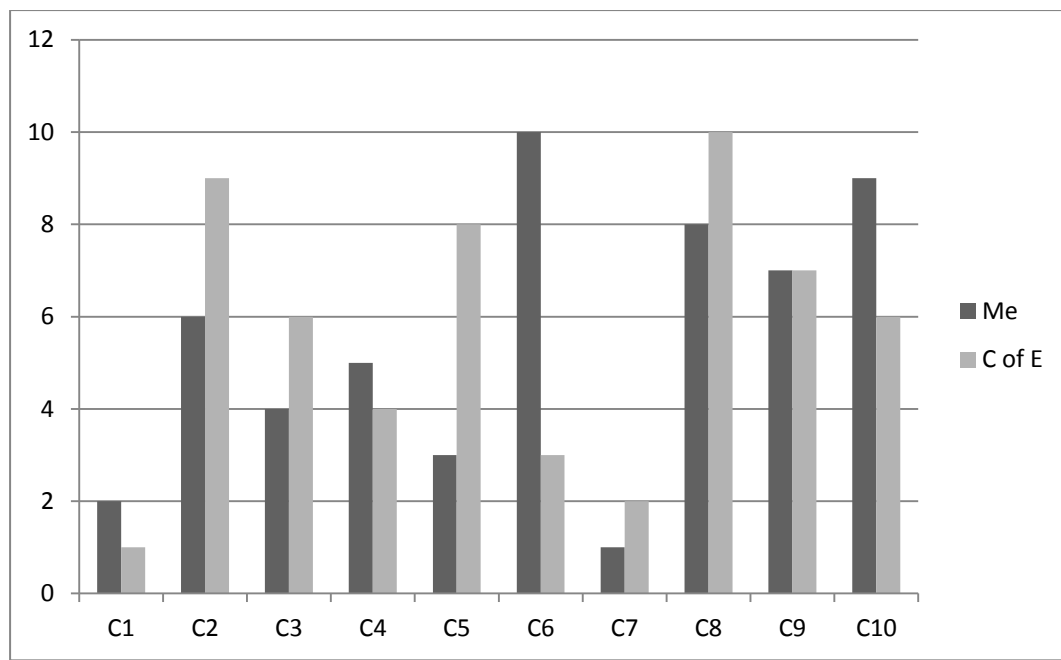
²⁶ So that all the positive poles are not at the same end, the constructs are deliberately mixed up.

Ruth's Grid with Ratings

1	Me now as L	Me ideally as L	Bishop sees me as L	Clergy see me as L	Man in same job	C of E sees me as L	Like to be seen by C of E	Me as L in 5yrs	Women disciples	Lay people see as L	7
Affirmed as a L	3	1	4	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	Criticised as a L
Reject Ch structures	5	4	5	6	3	4	4	4	2	6	Work within Ch structures
Determination	2	2	3	4	2	3	2	2	1	4	Flitting
Open re und L	2	3	6	4	4	5	3	3	3	3	Fixed re und L
Not ex seen as L	5	6	3	5	6	3	6	6	6	5	Clearly seen as L
Enables consensus	1	2	4	2	5	3	2	2	4	3	Autocratic
Stick in the mud	6	6	5	5	3	4	6	6	6	6	Breath of fresh air
Able to make diff	3	1	4	3	4	4	2	2	2	3	Keep things same
Clear role	3	1	5	4	3	5	1	2	2	5	Unclear role
Critical	3	7	2	5	4	4	6	6	2	4	Critical Friend

As well as rating each construct against each element, Ruth also ranked her ten constructs; the bar chart below illustrates the results. She did this twice, firstly putting the constructs in order, from the most important to the least important for her; secondly ranking them in the order that she thought the Church of England would put them.

Bar chart showing Ruth's rankings of her ten constructs for herself and for the Church of England



1 is least important - 10 is most important

How Ruth ranks the constructs for herself

The three most important constructs for Ruth (1st, 2nd, 3rd):

- C6 Enables consensus v Autocratic
- C10 Critical v Critical friend
- C8 Able to make a difference v Keeping things going the same

The three least important constructs for Ruth (8th, 9th, 10th):

- C5 Not explicitly seen as a leader v Clearly seen as a leader
- C1 Affirmed as a leader v Criticised as a leader
- C7 Stick in the mud v Breath of fresh air

How Ruth ranks the constructs for the Church of England

The three most important constructs for the C of E as perceived by Ruth (1st, 2nd, 3rd):

- C8 Able to make a difference v Keeping things going the same
- C2 Rejecting structures of the church v Prepared to work within structures of the church
- C5 Not explicitly seen as a leader v Clearly seen as a leader

The three least important constructs for the C of E as perceived by Ruth (8th, 9th, 10th):

- C6 Enables consensus v Autocratic
- C7 Stick in the mud v Breath of fresh air
- C1 Affirmed as a leader v Criticised as a leader.

There are two striking results here. Firstly, the construct that Ruth ranks as the most important for her, that is, *C6 Enables consensus v Autocratic*, she sees as being one of the least important for the Church of England. The fact that Ruth wants to work in a different way, by enabling consensus, and that she feels that this is not affirmed by the church, must make her feel as though she is swimming against the tide. Consequently, she has to hold the belief that this is the best way to exercise her leadership role with enough conviction and confidence to enable her to do this. Secondly, the construct *C5 Not explicitly seen as a leader v Clearly seen as a leader*, is the least important construct for Ruth whereas she perceives it to be the 3rd most important one for the Church of England. It appears that she believes that whereas the church focuses on the public face of leadership, she is more concerned with how she exercises that leadership.

Ruth perceives that the constructs *C1 Affirmed as a leader v Criticised as a leader* and *C7 Stick in the mud v Breath of fresh air*, are the least important ones for both her and for the church. Again, this may indicate that she seems less concerned with how she is

seen as a leader and more concerned with getting on with the job to the best of her ability.

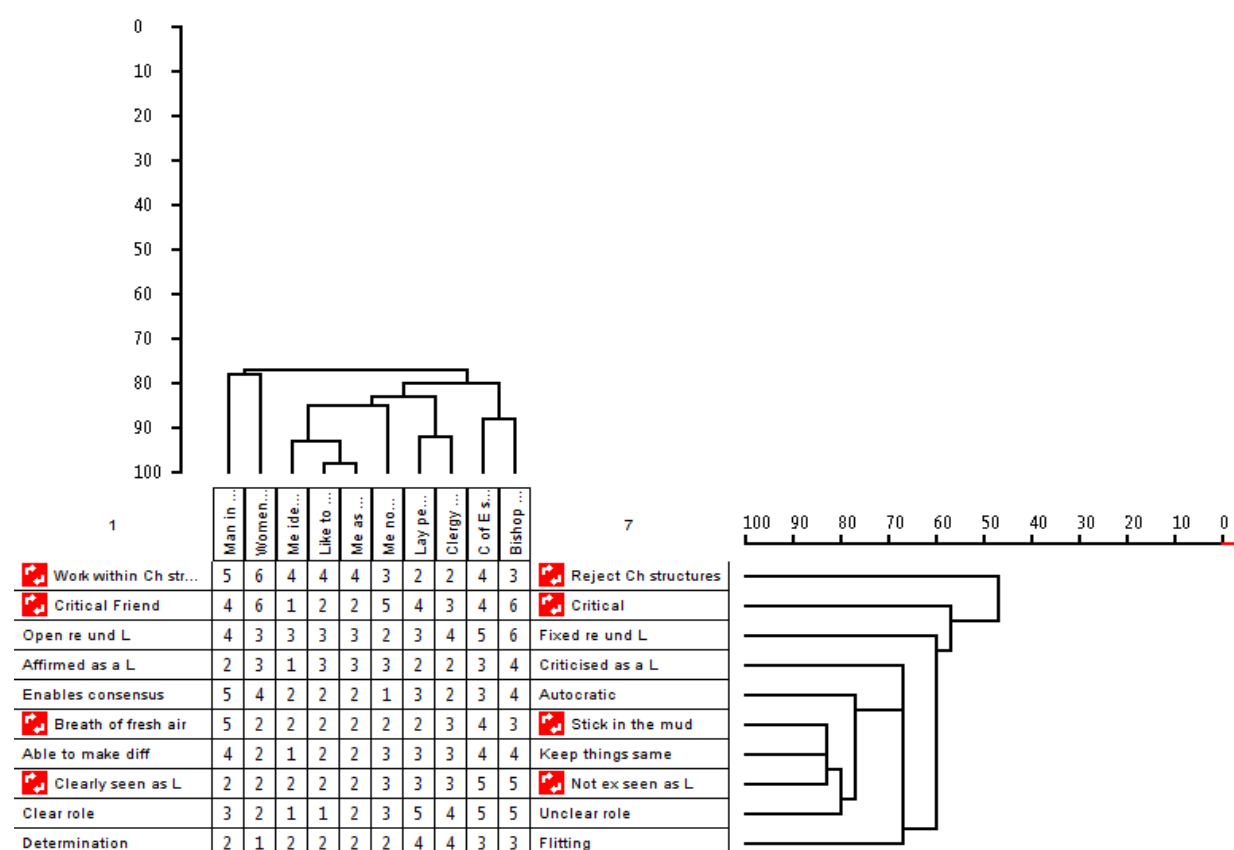
The construct, C8 *Able to make a difference v Keeping things going the same*, is seen by Ruth as significant both for herself and the Church of England. Clearly, from the

other interview data Ruth feels that the fact that they have chosen to appoint her, as a woman, to her role, is an indication that she will do things differently. Anecdotally other people have remarked that she is, 'a breath of fresh air', and although this construct (C7) is amongst the least important for her per se, it is part of her being 'able to make a difference'.

Finally, two other constructs are worth mentioning here, C10 *Critical v Critical friend*, and C2 *Rejecting structures of the church v Prepared to work within structures of the church*, the first being important for Ruth and the latter (Ruth perceives) being important for the church. She wants to do things differently, she is prepared to challenge and be a critical friend, she is not overly concerned with how she is seen as a leader as such but she does want to do all this within the structures of the church, rather than criticise from outside.

Having looked briefly at how Ruth ranked the constructs, for herself and for the church, we now return to the ratings given in the grid which, following the interview, were analysed using Grid Suite 4. The Dendrogram (on the following page) shows how particular constructs cluster together with other constructs (horizontal axis), and how (separately) elements cluster together with other elements (vertical axis). It shows which are most similar and which are most different from each other. The two tables following the Dendrogram give this information in statistical form, firstly for the elements and secondly, for the constructs. A match of 100% means the two elements (or constructs) are synonymous with each other and that the person has given them exactly the same ratings in their grid.

Dendrogram representing Ruth's Grid Results



Dendrogram Grid: Leadership - Client:Ruth

Cluster Analysis: Elements

		matching
Like to be seen by C of E	with Me as L in 5yrs	98.0%
Me ideally as L	with Like to be seen by C of E	93.0%
Clergy see me as L	with Lay people see as L	92.0%
Bishop sees me as L	with C of E sees me as L	88.0%
Me now as L	with Me as L in 5yrs	85.0%
Me now as L	with Lay people see as L	83.0%
Clergy see me as L	with C of E sees me as L	80.0%
Man in same job	with Women disciples	78.0%
Me ideally as L	with Women disciples	77.0%

Cluster Analysis: Constructs

		matching
Able to make a difference/Keep things same	with Not ex seen as L/Clearly seen as L	83.0%
Able to make a difference/Keep things same	with Stick in the mud/Breath of fresh air	83.0%
Clear role/Unclear role	with Not ex seen as L/Clearly seen as L	80.0%
Stick in the mud/Breath of fresh air	with Enables consensus/Autocratic	77.0%
Affirmed as a L/Criticised as a L	with Enables consensus/Autocratic	67.0%
Determination/Flitting	with Clear role/Unclear role	67.0%
Affirmed as a L/Criticised as a L	with Open re und L/Fixed re und L	60.0%
Critical/Critical Friend	with Open re und L/Fixed re und L	57.0%
Reject Church structures/Work within Church structures	with Critical/Critical Friend	47.0%

When we look at the elements, we observe that there are a number of interesting small clusters here. Firstly, *the ideals* are clustered together; there is a 98% match between how Ruth would like to be seen by the church and how she sees herself as a leader in five years' time. These are then highly linked with her ideally as a leader. This perhaps suggests someone who feels she is on the right path to being seen as the sort of leader she would like to be but also has some realism about both the timescale and the reality of actually reaching her ideal. Maybe this cluster is therefore best described as *hopes* for Ruth, rather than ideals (and may help explain why her Ideal element does not simply contain 1's and 7's).

This cluster of hopes then matches with Ruth's *now* at a level of 85% suggesting again someone who is comfortable about where she is and where she feels she is heading. If we look here at the ratings in the grid we see that generally there is a very close match between construct ratings for now and ideal. The only two constructs where this is rather less true are C7 *Able to make a difference* and C9 *Having a clear role*. It seems that Ruth would ideally like more "clarity about her role" and that although she is working towards feeling that she "is making a difference" she is also having to "keep things the same" rather more than she would like. This perhaps highlights the tension between wanting to make a difference but also, as she expressed in her interview, wanting to work within existing structures (and to some extent) within the expectations of her role.

Two further small clusters of two are also highly matching. How clergy and lay people see her matches at 92%, and how the bishop sees her matches (at 88%) with how she thinks the church sees her. It could be here that clergy/ lay people are similar because they are seen as colleagues, and bishop/ C of E refers more to those in authority over her. It is then interesting to observe the close connection between how Ruth sees herself as a leader now and how she thinks lay people see her. Perhaps this picks up some of the ambivalence Ruth seems to demonstrate in her interview about the extent to which she is a leader or not, also, in a positive sense, her sense of vocation/ calling being as valid whether she is in a church role or role outside the church. It could also be that she finds her relationships with lay people potentially less challenging than the relationships she has with the bishop and the church, for example, in terms of attitudes expressed or decisions made.

Finally, there are some connections in our last cluster where, *man in the same job as me* connects fairly highly with "women disciples", and then these women disciples' links with *me ideally as a leader*. There seems to be something here about a man in the same job being able to fulfil the role in the way Ruth would ideally like also to fulfil the role, as a "woman disciple". We can only speculate whether this is to do with having the freedom to fail, the requisite support, or the availability of role models. However, if we return to the grid we see that Ruth feels that both, a man in the same role and the women disciples, have much more freedom to *reject church structures* (C1) than she does now or ideally. She also believes, in contrast to these two elements, that she (now and ideally), enables *consensus* (as opposed to being autocratic, C5). Given that, she ranked this as her most important construct (and one of the least important for the church) this is significant. It perhaps suggests someone who recognises that whilst she may not have the freedom to reject church structures, she is nevertheless clear about what is important to her and what sort of leader she will work towards being, within the church structures. This seems to be supported by her second most important construct about being able to be a *critical friend* (as opposed to just being critical C10). She is prepared to work within the structures constructively but is unafraid to challenge and question where she needs to.

One of the things that is clear from the constructs in the dendrogram is that although there is matching between the constructs, the ten constructs are also quite distinctive and therefore all have meaning for Ruth. Ruth's third most important ranked construct C7 *Able to make a difference (v Keeping things the same)* is the highest matched construct and is clustered with C8 *Being clearly seen as a leader* and C6 *Being a breath of fresh air*. Thus, it appears that being able to take action is, as for many of the women, a crucial part of what it means to inhabit a senior leadership role. The two constructs C9 *Clear role v Unclear role* and C7 *Able to make a difference v Keep things the same* have two of the greatest differences in Ruth's ratings between now and ideal. The lack of clarity about her role impacts on the extent to which Ruth perceives herself to be seen explicitly as a leader; although her focus and priority is on "making a difference", perhaps she feels that if there was more clarity about her role she would be able to make even more of a difference.

Another cluster that is worth exploring here is focused around construct C5 *Enabling consensus*, which Ruth ranked as her most important construct. Enabling consensus is most closely matched with the construct about being a *breath of fresh air* (C6) but is also linked with C4 about being *affirmed as a leader*. Interestingly, if we return to the grid we see that Ruth already feels that she enables consensus now but ideally she would like to be very slightly more autocratic (a 2 instead of a 1)! Therefore, although Ruth recognizes that she enables consensus and that this perhaps makes her seen as someone who is a "breath of fresh air", she maybe also thinks that, having enabled this way of working, she may also need sometimes to be a leader who is also able to more definite about the decisions she takes. We do not know exactly why this may be but perhaps Ruth's ratings on C4 give us a clue, as although she feels somewhat affirmed in her leadership role this is far from the affirmation she would like to receive about her leadership. Consequently, we might assume therefore that although Ruth is exercising her leadership in a way that she thinks is best (consensually), it must also feel somewhat insecure and uncertain because of the lack of affirmation she feels she gets. This uncertainty seems to show up again in the next small cluster of C10 *Determination* (v *Flitting*) and C9 about the clarity (or otherwise) of her role. Although Ruth seems to be where she wants to be on the Determination/ Flitting spectrum, she perhaps feels that if there was more clarity about her role, both her bishop and the church would see her as more determined (and less flitting) than Ruth perceives that they do currently.

Being *affirmed as a leader* then clusters with having an *open understanding of leadership* which then in turn also connects with whether you are *critical friend* or just critical. Being able to be a "critical friend" is Ruth's second most important construct and yet this is the construct where she rates her *now* and *ideal* as being furthest away (and being even further away for her bishop). Whereas ideally Ruth would like to be seen as someone who is a critical friend she believes that she is someone who is seen now as being just critical. Going back to the grid it looks as though Ruth thinks that her bishop has fairly fixed ideas about what leadership is, whereas she has rather open ideas. This trio of constructs, taken with the interaction of the three elements of Ruth's now, ideal and how she believes her bishop sees her, points to the potential for at

worst some conflict over differing expectations and at best, a rather uncomfortable situation for Ruth.

Perhaps we find a partial answer in our final cluster, albeit at a match of only 47% between the construct about being a *critical friend* and C1 *Work within the church structures* (v *Reject church structures*). Ruth's ratings seem to show that she believes that a man in the same job as her and the women disciples both have much more freedom to reject church structures than she does. Although ideally she does not seem to want to reject church structures to the extent that she thinks these two groups can, it does appear that she would like a bit more freedom to do so. She thinks that lay people, clergy, the church and the bishop, all see her as someone who has to work more within the structures than she would like. Unlike a number of the other women in this study, Ruth does not seem to experience some of the benefits of being the first woman to ..., for example, that there may be fewer preconceptions about the way the role might be inhabited.

What is clear though is that Ruth feels she is a long way from being able to be the "critical friend" that she really wants to be as she inhabits her leadership role. This seems to leave her with some questions. Does she stick to her principles about how she thinks she should inhabit the role, live with the lack of affirmation from her bishop and hope that over time she begins to be seen as someone who is not just critical but a critical friend? Alternatively, does she modify her leadership to (possibly) receive more affirmation, be seen as less critical and maybe (in her bishop's eyes at least), be seen as someone who is able to make more of a difference?

Summaries of each of the 14 Case Studies

This section presents a short summary of each of the case studies. Eleven of the 14 women were interviewed, consequently the summaries for the three women - Abigail, Chloe and Tabitha - who were not interviewed but who provided the other information requested, are shorter.

Abigail

- Abigail's job is a busy one, she juggles many different tasks, consequently she prioritises and then focuses on those things which she considers to be "clearly part of her job".
- Abigail feels that there are now a "good number" of women in senior positions in the church, and therefore the experience of women's leadership was now "normative". She is a competent leader who is perhaps rather more comfortable talking about her leadership role in terms of the tasks that it involves rather than how she, as a person, inhabits her role. This may also help explain why the fact that she is a woman doing this role is less significant for her.

Chloe

- Although Chloe enjoys her job and finds it interesting, her Self Characterisation reveal a number of paradoxes, which are not easy to resolve.
- She wrote, *"Chloe is ... trying to get to grips with being an Archdeacon. The diocese is very male, despite succeeding a woman, and Chloe is wanting to be herself as well as to do a traditional role in the best possible way. She is a good listener, and takes an interest in people as well as the challenges about parishes and buildings that come her way. Chloe is independent and, unlike many others, is able to commit most of her life to the service of God this makes her very conscientious and hard-working. She tries hard to maintain a balanced life and to follow interests for her own age. Chloe tries hard to get herself heard - she often though has to rely on others to see her potential and skills - new to the role Chloe is aware that she needs to be confident in the role while lacking the confidence in whether she can do the job in a way others expect it to be done."*

- Chloe is trying hard to get to grips with her role and yet be herself, she wants to fulfil the role in a traditional way and yet not be like the “stuffy traditional archdeacon of old”. She wants to be heard and appear confident even when she does not feel it, to be accepted by others in senior positions and to win their trust.

Damaris

- Damaris recognises that the role is both about doing it “for its own sake” and also “as a way to the top”; consequently, she carries “the weight of expectation” of what this role may mean in terms of the exploration of vocation. Although Damaris and, to some extent her bishop, are more “open about the next stage”, she believes most other people in the church - including a man in the same role as her - seem to make assumptions about what the “next stage” will be. Damaris accepts that the role invites a number of assumptions, including being “seen as a potential bishop” which can mean that there is a lack of openness from others, about the next step. Conversely, however, the role also enables it to be a “testing ground for future leadership in the church”.

- All of Damaris' ten constructs are distinctive and therefore important for her but vocation and integrity are her two key themes.

- Damaris wants, above all else, to inhabit her role with integrity and openness but she regards the church as primarily focusing on “how the job is done”, with an emphasis on skills and evidence of leadership.

- Damaris is seen as someone with experience with proven leadership skills; she is regarded as someone who wants to build on experience, is able to make a difference but also as someone who is still willing to learn.

- Damaris feels that although she is seen as a leader in her own right, she is also explicitly seen as a “competent woman”. Conversely, even though she feels that being a woman was definitely a factor in her appointment, she believes that she is now seen primarily in her role as a senior leader. However, she acknowledges that the attributes which led to her being approached in the first place, for example, her good relational, problem solving and negotiating skills, rather than “laying down the law” or “imposing power”, also represent the way she likes to work. She wonders therefore whether she has these because she is a woman or whether these abilities are due to personality.

Elisabeth

- Although Elisabeth seems secure in her role, she stills feels she would like more feedback, as she develops her confidence and works out into what sort of leader she wants to develop.
- Elisabeth feels it is important to have a framework for leadership that involves theology and focuses on wholeness (rather than a "secular packaged" model), as well as the ability and willingness to effect change, and be able to be trusted in relationships. As she puts it, "... a biblical/ theological model, embraces flaws and glory, failure and success, warts and all. It includes calling, vocation and recognising Christ as a leader". Thus, leadership includes the personal and the pastoral, with the focus on spiritual growth and the mission of the church.
- Elisabeth thinks that whilst management will always be part of the role, leadership is "conferred or given" to one and also has to be earned. Ideally, she wants her leadership to be both functional and inspirational and to be seen as someone who is open and prepared to take risks.
- Elisabeth believes that as a leader you need to be able to hold onto "long term objectives" and be able to "move things on". "Although there can be wisdom in the 'muddle', you need to bring about change as people are looking for resolution"; key to this is good communication.
- Elisabeth regards the fact that there are no or few women role models as both good and bad. She sees it as an opportunity to do things differently, "unlock the role" and "break open doors". Women are newer and therefore more "risky" but may bring undiscovered skills and other things to the role. Some of the key things that women bring are trust, reliability and integrity in relationships.
- Elisabeth thinks that people automatically respect men in the role because of their good history/ experience and that consequently women need to get a "hang of the role", and whilst this period of transition is uncomfortable, the presence of women in senior leadership positions is vital.
- Elisabeth asks, "How do I emerge as a leader in my own right?" This is especially pertinent for her as she remains in the same diocese but with a different role.

Hannah

- There are a number of things in Hannah's past (for example, how she has tackled previous roles) which have impacted on how she is now seen as a leader but she thinks these now are much less important than being "future orientated" and fulfilling one's potential.

- Hannah seems clear, confident, and comfortable with her role, what she is doing and what she thinks. She has a job description but she sits lightly to it and prefers to work out her own way of working. She seems to align her view of her own leadership primarily with that of the bishop.

- For Hannah, being a leader is about being an agent of change, helping to bring dreams into reality, and working in a collaborative, mutual and consultative way. Also important is having hope, vision and courage that is prepared to cross boundaries.

- Hannah thinks that a leader must have both the ability to work strategically and put a high value on creating integrity in relationships. Structures are valuable but people should always be more important. Hannah believes that competency and caring must go together in relationships. When this happens there is, "development, fulfilment and joy where potential is realised".

- Hannah thinks it is really important to "know oneself" and that it is helpful if there is a close fit in perception between how you and other people think about the role; "this prevents false expectations, shows us where to start by working with reality and enables proper, honest relationships with integrity".

- Even though Hannah appears confident and secure in her role and wants to be "true to herself as a woman", she reports that at present, "it takes a lot of courage to manage" her public role and to be a "pioneering female" (as there is little or no reference base). She observes that, "it takes more courage to maintain a senior position than it does to get there". She feels that being a woman in a senior position in the church is like hitting a "marzipan ceiling", "... you do have a voice at the table but working at a Diocesan level is difficult and therefore quite costly personally".

Julia

- Julia's ratings on her *like to be seen/now/me as a leader in 5 years* indicate someone who is comfortable with herself as a leader currently but also someone who is hopeful and realistic in working towards her 'ideal' becoming a reality.
- Julia believes the church focuses on things which could be considered *evidence* for good leadership - being able "to do" and be seen as "doing" and developing positive relationships.
- Julia thinks it important to be able to "be myself" in role and that in key relationships there is an "accurate and realistic" understanding of who she is as a leader. How Julia sees herself as a leader is very similar to how she thinks other people see her as a leader. However, she aligns how she views herself as a leader most closely with that of the bishop.
- Being able to be trusted in relationships is a crucial issue for Julia and this enables her to be the kind of leader she wants to be - confident, clear sighted, someone who takes action and grows as a leader. Honest trusting relationships that involve challenge as well as encouragement are a positive consequence of being a Christian and at the heart of discipleship.
- Julia acknowledges that the role can be helpful, as it helps you to be seen in role primarily as a priest or Archdeacon rather than as a woman, and that consequently few assumptions are made about her as a leader because of her gender, at least by those with whom she has day-to-day contact.
- However, she believes that gender is a really important issue for the church - three of her nine constructs are about gender; good leadership is still largely defined by "masculine traits" and there is still a tendency for men to be polarised in their working relationships with women.
- Julia argues that having women in senior roles serves a symbolic function, "... it's about presence, not about words, and it shows there *are* women in senior leadership positions." However, she is clear that although she is, "at the table", she is there as an Archdeacon and not as someone who is there to represent women.

Keren

- In five years' time, Keren hopes that she will be the leader that she ideally would like to be.
- Keren believes that, "the right structures free the church for mission" and that authority and identity (as a leader) comes from church tradition (viewed in a "radical rather than fixed way") which gives the "freedom to inhabit a senior role without apology".
- Keren asks whether she will be able and be valued for encompassing a broader view of what being church might involve.
- Keren feels that she is enabled as a leader because her gifts are valued and recognised - this enables her to exercise her authority and helps her to feel that others have discerned her role as a leader. This also "frees" her to have a broader sense of what her role as a leader might mean within the wider community.
- Keren is clear how lay people and the church see her as a leader but rather less clear about how she is currently seen as a leader by other clergy and the bishop. She appears to have mixed feelings about how she would like to be seen.²⁷
- Keren believes it is the role, not the gender, which defines leadership. However, although Keren said several times that gender was not important, she believes she "inhabits" her role in a different way - leading, "... alongside as well as in front, challenge goes alongside support. Women *do* faith, encouraging, enabling, differently (from men) but you cannot always put your finger on it. Women give away authority and are maybe more relational".
- Keren's challenge is how to enable others to recognise and value her gifts in a way that allows them to see her as a leader who is rooted in community, focused on the radical nature of tradition, and also really able to be herself, inhabiting her role as a woman.

²⁷ Perhaps challenging assumptions *and* trying to get rooted in community can be difficult to hold onto at the same time, and so consequently this results in some ambivalence about how exactly she would like the 'church' (at a national, rather than local level) to view her.

Lois

- Lois' three most important issues are the courage to make decisions for the future, the importance of having one's leadership affirmed and validated by others, and the capacity to "take authority", whether this is given formally or informally.

- Lois thinks that church leaders need to be able to work within structures and to have the skills to mould the structures. She also argues that leaders need to be able to take initiative, "have a go", live authentically and confidently.

- Lois seems content to accept that the church understands what constitutes good leadership and is happy to develop her leadership within this understanding. She is comfortable in her authority as a leader, and this includes those situations where the authority is not formally given but in which she is willing to be proactive in working out what her leadership might mean.

- Lois believes strongly that person and role go together and that this is a continuous learning process of accepting and understanding "who I am" as a leader and as a person.

- Lois believes that leadership has some innateness about it but it is also something that can be developed. She regards a key aspect of leadership to be about "raising up" other leaders, by being a role model, identifying potential, gifts and skills, pushing and encouraging risk taking into leadership. She feels that women especially need to be "given fair assessment", confidence and courage (as it is hard to do for oneself).

- As a women, Lois reports that she "lives more dangerously" than people expect, for example, with appointments. Although Lois is an experienced and secure leader, she reports that having her leadership affirmed and validated by others, as well as access to a mentor, enables her to have this confidence in her leadership.

Mary

- For Mary leadership is part of a process and there should be flexibility both about what it is and about how it is exercised.

- Mary sees herself explicitly as a "woman" leader. She feels this is primarily because of how the role has been "set up" by others, for example observations made about her clothing rather than about what she has said after a lecture, and remarks like, "you are the first woman to ... people will be watching you ... don't let us down ..." etc. She also recognises that "being the first woman to ..." gives women some opportunities in the

working out of their roles whereas men are constrained by a “collective understanding” of their role.

- Mary articulates a dilemma: on one hand, she is grateful that men in senior positions have enabled her (and other women) to get their senior posts and yet, at the same time, she knows this is “paternalistic and patronising”. Mary feels that other people tend to carry a lot of “baggage” in terms of their expectations of women leaders, consequently it is more difficult for women to “manage their public roles” as they are more “noticed”. Mary would like the perceptions of others and herself as leader to be as close as possible.

- There is quite a complicated interweaving of two key issues for Mary - gender and agency. Agency is about the ability to take action and effect change, and is primary in Mary’s understanding of what leadership should be about. For her, to be seen as a “person of agency” implies leading “stereotypically as a man”; however Mary regards that a “man in the same role as her” leads “stereotypically as a woman”, that is, as a person who relies more on being “salt” and having influence, rather than bringing about change. In other words, this seems to be less about the actual gender of a person and more about the actual ability of the leader to be able to effect change. Given that Mary carries the “weight” of being the first woman to ... etc, the question is whether, as someone who is seen explicitly as a “woman” leader, she has the freedom both to be the sort of leader she wants (with agency) and have the freedom to fail sometimes too?

Naomi

- As a relatively new leader in post, Naomi is still working out what sort of leader she is and wants to be. She questioned the extent to which she is already a leader but accepts the “current reality” is that she is seen a leader; in this ambiguity she feels that there is a healthy overlap between who she is a person and her role.

- Naomi wrote the following in her Self Characterisation, “Naomi is...*constantly on the go. She is very busy but organised. Other people would see her as having it all under control. She appears confident and self-controlled. She appears warm with people and relationships are important to her. She relates well to all people and because maintaining relationships are important to her, this is one of the things that causes her stress.*”

She is also able to be ruthless where necessary and is not afraid to say tough things. Her family and friends are very important to her - this links with relationships across all spheres of life being important. Those who know her well know that she gets energy from being on her own, not with other people and space for prayer is very important too".

- Naomi describes herself as being like "a work in progress", a new leader who wants to grow and develop and would also like to be able to "be herself" in her role.

- Naomi perceives that other people make assumptions about her in role and this makes it harder to be able to lead as herself. Interestingly though, she believes that the bishop does not make these assumptions and this allows her to shape her role and lead as herself.

- Naomi very much wants to be herself in role *and* be accurately perceived by others. For example, she says other people perceive her as confident and having things under control and yet she does not always feel this. She also relates well to people and believes that relationships across all the spheres of her life are important but those who know her well know that, she "gets her energy from being on her own" and that relationships can also cause her stress.

- Creativity and change are key concepts for Naomi, for they are the "work of the Spirit, the feminine side of God"; she wants to exercise a leadership role which is creative and visionary, rather than being about managing and responding. The "feminine side of God" and biblical women serve as resources in Naomi's ministry.

- Although Naomi felt that being a women meant it "flags up differences so that other differences get noticed", she also acknowledged that being a women might give her more scope to shape her role.

- Naomi's challenge is how to be more open about her "inner reality" (of not always feeling like she is a leader) and allow her thinking and her perception of herself to be challenged, in a way that helps her to grow as a leader and enable good relationships with others.

Phoebe

- Phoebe wrote in her Self Characterisation, "Phoebe is ... *a recently appointed Archdeacon who is struggling to find a priestly model for exercising this role. She often feels isolated and dislocated from church community. She is developing a strong sense of*

the incarnational and the need to provide her own support structures. In the parishes, though she is at ease and enjoys good working relationships with both clergy and church wardens. She often uses phrases when describing her role on the staff meeting as, 'Alice in Wonderland', 'Kings Court', 'Emperor's New Clothes'. These she sees as regional rather than national issues and attached to (particular) personalities. She feels she is trying to fit into a male shape role, which does not reflect her own gospel values."

- For Phoebe, the two elements, *Me as a leader in 5 years time* and *Me ideally as a leader* are synonymous. This suggests that Phoebe is hopeful that things will change quite significantly during the next five years, despite the fact that at present she has four constructs where her *now* and *ideal* are nearly at opposite ends.

- Unlike most of the other women in the study, Phoebe is in a different diocese from that of the bishop who encouraged her to apply for the post. Consequently she does not have the level of support she expected and although she tries to be "who she is" in role, she does view it very much as a role.

- Phoebe is aware that because she is regarded as being able to work well with people she gets given "pastoral stuff". She notes the tension here between working towards a more "complementary" model, with men and women perhaps contributing different things, and simply falling into stereotypical ways of working. Such complementarity takes a "great deal of courage" but for Phoebe it is vital as it models the "wholeness" that the gospel speaks of. She believes that this in turn leads to a healthy institution and ultimately to the "growth of the Kingdom".

- Phoebe tries to show there is a different way to be a leader, for example, by being "collegial", creating "interdependence", asking questions rather than being directive, "shared oversight" and, above all, openness about what constitutes "good leadership".

- Phoebe feels she is seen as a "trophy woman" rather than a "token woman", so that the diocese can be congratulated for having a woman in a senior post. She often feels that she is trying to fit into a "male shaped role", which does not reflect her gospel values.

- Phoebe's principal challenge is whether she can find the level of support she needs in order for her to continue to have the courage to model "complementarity" and "open up" the issue of what constitutes "effective leadership".

Sarah

- Ideally Sarah would like to be seen simply as a priest and leader, rather than as a “symbolic women” but she seems to have “set this aside” to get on with the job.
- The church is largely self governing so it needs to have structures but Sarah feels it’s important to work out how to make the structures work for you rather than become a passive recipient of them. In practical terms, this is an ongoing process and she very much takes responsibility for her own growth.
- Sarah feels that the symbolic needs to be “moved away” from her as an individual but also acknowledges that this symbolism can be a positive thing for the church if it is not focused on one person. However, to counterbalance the fact that she is seen symbolically attracting assumptions to be made about her and her role, she finds it helpful to have a small group of people who provide her both with challenge and support.
- She sees the “big picture” but is aware that she is one of the few who does but that this gives her a responsibility to exercise leadership by taking a step back from the immediate and discovering what the important things are, not just reacting to the urgent.
- Vocation is clearly a key theme for Sarah and she believes that senior leaders within the church, especially women, need to be free to explore their vocations; rather than the church having its thinking about vocation taken over by the media or public perception.
- Sarah asks some key questions about how she can both embrace tradition and yet not allow the tradition to smother her strengths and potential as a woman.
- Sarah feels that generally “women at the table” are seen positively, as is the reality that she is often used as a “change agent”.

Tabitha

- Tabitha thinks that as a woman she has been able to bring about significant change; despite all the challenges, she has managed to “turn things around” and “make things better”; she describes herself as a “pioneer, a transformer, an enabler”.
- Tabitha’s role is a broad one, extending “beyond the church” to the diocese; this is a role which to some extent is shared with the diocesan bishop.
- When Tabitha was first appointed, she felt she was “a woman on her own”; now she feels that “the appointment of a woman to this post would seem entirely normal”.

Collective Data

The 14 women involved in this study came from a variety of backgrounds into their current roles. At the time of interview, some had been in their role for less than two years, whilst one had been in her role for over 11 years. All but one is ordained. Ten of the women had significant amounts of work experience before entering the church in a full-time paid capacity. Their jobs or professions included nursing (2); teaching (2); speech and language therapist; management consultant; social worker; administrator; research and training for a food manufacturer; research chemist; and information officer/science editor. Most of the women had managerial responsibilities in their jobs.

The routes into their senior roles within the church were also very varied, with all but two having had responsibility for a parish (as Team Vicar, Priest-in-Charge, Vicar or Team Rector). The one ordained woman who had not been in charge of a parish had been a Bishop's Chaplain. Two of the 12 women with parish experience had also been Residentiary Canons in Cathedrals. One of the 14 women is currently a lay canon and a further two are Cathedral Canons alongside their primary senior posts. Before appointment to their senior posts, the women had undertaken a wide variety of roles in dioceses: *Diocesan Director of Ordinands*; Church Planting Officer; Evangelism Advisor; Children's Advisor; youth chaplaincy; and responsibility for communications. Two of them had been hospital chaplains, two had been Area Deans, and five of the women had been involved in some form of theological education. Many of these responsibilities were in addition to their primary ministerial role.

Summary of the case studies looked at as a group

Most of the women expressed the desire to be able to "be myself in role" and to "be accurately perceived" by others. The issue of managing one's public role was significant and a challenge for most of them, not least because, with an emphasis on integrity and being trusted in relationships, they wanted there to be a close match between how they are viewed and how they really are as leaders. The women's

concern about how they can be themselves in role connects with the skills and attributes they need for leadership and how they believe that leadership should be exercised. For example, as well as being aware that they are role models, the women are also conscious that they need to have an ability to determine priorities, to have hope and vision, in order to be able to work strategically. They attempt to do this by being collegial, creating interdependence and asking questions rather than being directive. Being able "to be trusted in relationships" is central to many of the women who seek to encourage mutuality and consultation in their relationships; connected with this was the "ability to make a difference".

The women highlighted a number of other aspects about leadership, including that is something that is both conferred and earned, functional but also inspirational, transformational as well as enabling. Leadership also involved spirituality and an understanding of the mission of the church. Leadership could also, "help to bring dreams into reality". However, "bringing about change", "having agency" was vital and was the only aspect mentioned by all the women.

Apart from Phoebe, the women in this study are working in a diocese where the diocesan bishop either has appointed them directly or has facilitated their appointment. Consequently, most have a supportive and helpful relationship with their bishop and often align their views of themselves as leaders most closely with that of the bishop. However, a number of them would also have valued more feedback from the bishop and other senior staff as they developed as leaders.

Many of the women commented on the importance of having structures; typical observations were that:

"The right structures free the church for mission and give the freedom to inhabit a senior role without apology" (Keren).

"The church is largely self governing so it needs to have structures but it's important to work out how to make the structures work for you rather than become a passive recipient of them" (Sarah).

“Leaders need to be able to work within structures but to be able to take initiative, to ‘have a go’, live authentically and confidently and to ‘take authority’ in a wider context” (Lois).

Vocation is also a key theme for a number of the women who “carry the weight of expectation” (Damaris) but want to be free to explore their vocations. Sarah declared that, “The church cannot allow itself to have its thinking about vocation taken over by the media or public perception”. Damaris recognised that the role is fulfilled not only “for its own sake” but also “as a way to the top”; it can as well play the part of a “testing ground for future leadership in the church”.

Without doubt, the biggest issue for all the women was gender. Some of the women noted that they had certain skills - relational, problem solving and negotiating skills - but did not know whether they had these because they were women or because these skills were inherent in their individual personalities. Whatever the reality, most of them felt that they worked differently from men, leading alongside as well as in front, encouraging, enabling, although this was often difficult to substantiate. Generally, they suggested that women tried to give away authority, were maybe more creative and visionary, rather than managing and responding; trust, reliability and integrity in relationships were paramount.

Many of the women observed that they were still seen explicitly as "women leaders" and that there were advantages as well as disadvantages to being a woman in a senior role.

Damaris believed that although being a woman was definitely a factor in her appointment she was now seen in her role as a senior leader. A few acknowledged that women in senior roles were often used as "change agents" and that this could be quite costly. Generally, however women "at the table" served a symbolic function in a positive sense, primarily because women's presence shows there *are* women in senior leadership positions.

In addition to taking the individual case studies and attempting to draw out some common themes as we have just done, the constructs were also collated as a separate exercise, to add another layer of validity to the results. Broadly, speaking this led to

the identification of similar themes, but what was also interesting was the distribution of the constructs around these key themes. For example, about 30% of the constructs concerned the structures of the church. These covered a range of issues from how tradition could empower or disempower; how much scope there was for women to develop their vocations free from the expectations of others and how women should work with and relate to the structures. Constructs about the exercise of leadership made up nearly 40% of the total. Being seen as a leader in your own right; being inspirational as well as functional; a desire for other people to experience good leadership; and an emphasis on the importance of relationships were all considered to be significant here. A further 20% of the constructs were to do with the role and this category included the overlap between person and role; managing the public role; the extent to which one has a clear understanding of the role; and what could be considered the "personal aspects" of the role, for example whether potential and gifts are being realised.

Finally, although only about 10% of the constructs were specifically about gender, this one category seemed to permeate many of the other constructs in different ways. For example, the construct *Being a breath of fresh air v Being a stick in the mud*, is partly about different ways of working but primarily, in the current context, is being used in the sense of "being a woman in this role". The gender constructs are about being "the first woman to ..."; carrying expectations; having to live with the assumptions of others; and questioning whether one is seen as a "leader" or a "woman leader", as well as an acknowledgement that gender may have a positive, as well as negative impact on how leadership is exercised and perceived by others.

Helps and Hindrances

As part of the interview process, the women were able to identify some of the factors that helped and hindered them in their roles. They were asked to try to put these factors in the form of constructs (with two poles) in order to aid the meaning they gave to the issues identified. Our primary focus here is on the aspects that the women found helpful in their roles.

The relationship with God, spiritual life and faith were foundational for all of the women. A number also identified the importance of a routine of prayer and sacrament, having a gospel/scriptural base, and in particular having a community of other people with whom they could share and participate in this daily cycle. Many also identified the necessity of having the time and space for reflection, to step back to allow change and understanding and to enable time to plan; and, on a personal level, to lead a balanced life with outside interests and time off "with purpose". All the women also mentioned the necessity of friends (both "critical friends" and "accepting friends"), personal support and family; having a stable home life was important as it helped to avoid "living with too many variables". One woman said that having a husband and children was crucial for her whilst another mentioned that being single (and having no husband and children) was helpful!

Linking *person* and *process* in leadership was the long list of personal attributes and skills that the women believed were helpful in their senior leadership roles. These included, a broad range of reading; flexibility; willingness to take risks; success in effecting change; good time management; imagination and creativity energy and vision; having a sense of purpose; the ability to make quick decisions and grasp issues; a "problem solving brain"; the capacity to work on several projects at once; wide experience as a communicator; a sense of humour; and, receiving encouragement and thanks. Underpinning all of these was the importance of good relationships, identified as a crucial issue for all the women.

Having supportive colleagues was also important. One woman phrased this as having a "consistent, coherent colleagueship". This included people who could be trusted working together collaboratively, united with a common purpose. Many of the women had had experience of colleagues who undermined, were envious, obstructive, critical, withheld information and were subversive; consequently having supportive colleagues was a crucial issue for all the women. However, many of the women also mentioned the importance of colleagues being able to be honest with each other, as one person put it, "friendly critics" rather than people who "affirm ignorantly". In addition, perhaps unsurprisingly given the involvement that bishops had in the appointments of

most of these women, a number specifically mentioned the importance of having understanding and supportive episcopal colleagues, who are available. Also helpful were the bishops, who rather than having an “obsessive belief in status” or displaying an attitude of “father knows best”, understood about their specific role and who were, “able to use the same shorthand”. Many of the women also noted the value in having clarity of role and a job description. In addition, when there was a good understanding of their role by others, it meant that less time spent on inappropriate work.

Training was another factor that aided the facilitation of effective leadership, and specific topics mentioned were understanding theories of leadership; senior leadership training programmes; ecclesiastical issues; technical knowledge, including IT skills; management training; and good induction. Also helpful were knowing the right questions to ask and the ability to grasp core issues, as well as access to a network of those with knowledge and experience who could act as advisors. A number of the women also mentioned having a work consultant, another form of supervision, or someone with whom they could engage in reflective practice, as being useful. Many of the women also noted the necessity of being able to build on experience - both in employment, outside and within the church, and life experience generally. Others had valued the experience as members of the Liturgical Commission, the General Synod or in other areas of church life, not only for developing their leadership skills and self-confidence, but also to help them to be aware of some of the difficulties and challenges they would face.

Clearly, an excellent, efficient PA and good secretarial support were also valuable. In general, having a well-managed and resourced organisation and a sensible workload with realistic expectations as regards tasks and time was indispensable.

A number of the women brought up the issue of gender and inclusion as being important for them. Inclusion implied a diocese with a sense of focus and hope, and light structures with an emphasis on "every member ministry", coupled with an acceptance of people regardless of gender or sexuality. In relation to self, role and gender, it was deemed supportive to feel visible and know that you were being heard; although generally, the authority of the role was helpful in carrying out the

requirements of the post. One or two of the younger women felt they were doubly different, because of their age and gender, and felt that people sometimes took them less seriously than they would an older man.

Having women friends, peers and role models was also valuable, as was working with colleagues who affirmed women's ministry and "helped you to feel you have a right to be there". Conversely, the appointment of colleagues opposed to the ordination of women was undermining and discouraging. Finally, a few of the women mentioned issues to do with the wider community and how the church was perceived publicly. Amongst some of the helpful attitudes were having the support of the civic community, those who took an interest in the organisation and wanted it to succeed, and respect for priests.

The '3 roles' - Archdeacon

Dean

Theological Educator

Ten of the 14 women in this study were Archdeacons (over 70%) so in some senses, the collective results of the whole study are more normative for this group than for the two Deans and the two Theological Educators. Although a number of the key themes have already emerged, what is most noticeable about this group of Archdeacons is in the variety of views and experience. One of the areas where this is most noticeable is in the differences between the *now* and the *ideal* in the grids and interviews. This is perhaps because, unlike the Deans and Theological Educators who are all very experienced, proven leaders, some of the Archdeacons have been in their roles for a relatively short time.

For example, a number of the women who have been in post less than two years are hopeful that they will have reached their *ideal* in five years' time. One hopes they are not being overly optimistic and that they do not begin to lose heart if things take longer to change than expected. In contrast, those who had been in their roles for more than two years, whilst still working towards their ideal do not expect to have

reached it in 5 years time. Others felt it would help them to achieve their ideal if they had more clarity about their roles, although one thing that all the Archdeacons had in common, unlike the Deans or Theological Educators, was that they all had job descriptions. Most would like to be seen simply as a priest/leader rather than explicitly as a woman leader, but in general, they have set this aspect aside to get on with the job. Despite these differences, however, one key theme that seems to emerge for all the women, particularly for the Archdeacons, is that of the ability to take action, to bring about change; and they want to do this within a context of fostering integrity in relationships.

There were two Cathedral Deans - Sarah and Tabitha - in post at the time the empirical part of this study took place. Both completed the sheets giving biographical details and identifying the things that helped and hindered them in their roles. One completed the Self Characterisation and the other was interviewed, identified constructs and completed a grid that was then analysed. Clearly with such a small sample (albeit comprising 100% of the women in these posts), one must be hesitant to draw definite conclusions. However, given that these two women could be considered the most senior ordained women in the church, it is useful to look at some of the issues raised by these two women in very senior roles. Both have oversight of large staff teams of paid and voluntary workers, and both have an overview of a diocese in much the same way as the diocesan bishop. Indeed, both of them observed that they are the only people, apart from the diocesan bishop, who see the diocese as a whole. They also know they need to think strategically, see the "big picture", and beyond the church to civic, national and international life.

This is what Tabitha wrote in her Self Characterisation, *"Tabitha is...a pioneer, who, as the first woman to lead an English cathedral, put (it) on the map. She has had to handle very significant demands and opposition but nearly 10 years on the appointment of a woman to this post would seem entirely normal. A transformer, who has turned a beleaguered, defensive community into an expanding, outward-facing and attractive one. All that by way of one £2m building scheme and a second £7m scheme now in progress."*

Tabitha and Sarah are aware that they are much observed, that their roles carry a lot of historic experience and expectation, that they are viewed symbolically and regarded as pioneering women. It can be difficult for them therefore to develop an “authentic role free of projections, expectations and assumptions” and consequently to be able to explore their vocation, which, as Sarah observes, “is often driven by the media rather than the church”.²⁸ Both identify that they are generally “welcomed at the table”.

Others view them as people who will bring about change, who will transform, enable and turn things around. Although overall they are positive about this, they report that it does require a lot of energy and time from them as people, as does the ongoing dialogue with those who are opposed to women’s ordination. Interestingly, they were two (of only three) women who made no explicit comment about the issue of managing the public role. Both highlighted though the absolute necessity of having the sustenance of family (they were also two of only four women who were married with children) and a team of colleagues, who would both support you and to whom you could be accountable.

Another issue worth mentioning here is that of structure. The church, as Sarah puts it, “is dependent on its own quality assurance” and it is therefore necessary for there to be appropriate structures in place for this to happen to ensure accountability. There is a recognition that although they need to “work within the structures”, they also need to be able “to make the structures work for them”. Sarah makes a number of pertinent observations in this area, including the way tradition has often been used to disempower women and yet, she remarks, the “obvious models in church leadership either seem to be that of “successful chief executive” or “servant””. She wants to embrace the tradition and yet not compromise her strengths and potentials as a woman. Clearly here, there is a key focus on role, which includes not only the overlap between person and role but also how the management of the role in the public domain.

²⁸ On the day of the interview, Sarah showed me a double page spread about her from the previous day’s broadsheet newspaper, speculating whether she would be one of the first women bishops. Although it contained a number of photographs and quotes, neither she nor her office had been contacted before its release.

Both Sarah and Tabitha demonstrate an integrative function of leadership combining a number of different roles together. They have responsibilities to their own specific community but are also required to see beyond the church to civic and (inter)national life. As pioneering women, they have to be able to operate in a number of different spheres, as well as taking responsibility for their own development and actions. These various spheres include the social, political and religious.

There are two Theological Educators - Lois and Mary - in this study, both of whom manage paid staff teams and work in the area of initial ministerial education (also known as IME 1-3). Consequently, they relate to large numbers of mature students, most of whom will be ordained. One is the principal of a large theological college and the other is the warden of a college, which is part of a larger university structure. Lois is the only layperson in this group of women in senior positions but as Chair of the House of Laity on General Synod for many years, regarded as a leader in the church who exercises a lot of authority.

Again, we have a very small sample but both Lois and Mary contributed in substantial ways to the research, perhaps reflecting the value they place on academic research. Both carry the responsibility for the institution that they lead and therefore want to do all they can to "enable a wholesome institution" which has the courage to "focus on the future" (Lois).

Lois and Mary regard leadership as having "some innateness" about it, but also something that can be developed. They specifically encourage other women leaders to develop their potential and skills. They endeavour to, "help others feel more secure in an uncertain and dangerous environment" (Lois), so that they are able to grow in confidence and are more prepared to take risks. The importance of accepting and exercising authority - that given formally and that inferred informally - is another area on which they both concur. They believe leaders need skills to mould the structures, to take the initiative, to be proactive and above all to be "a person of agency". For Lois this leader is like Hilda of Whitby; for Mary it is someone like Catherine Parr or Josephine Butler. Without relying on who they are, or on their influence, this person has some authority to lead, within structures, but has a capacity to lead in a wider context, where authority is not formally given. Another important aspect of leadership

that they both mentioned was the ability to scan the horizon, to look at the big picture, and then the courage to “make decisions for the future, determining priorities but being wary of closing off options”.

They both see themselves explicitly as women leaders, but Mary thinks this is primarily because of "how it is set up by others". They acknowledge that, "being the first women to..." gives them opportunities, especially in relation to their roles situation where neither had a job description to start with. In addition, they have some freedom (within church guidelines) to lead their institutions as they choose. The price they pay for this freedom is that they have to carry the responsibility of working this out in practice, and the possibility of failure, on their own. Consequently, although both emphasised how crucial it was for *person* and *role* to go together, they have to work out what this means in practice given that they have to be self reliant as leaders and be able to deal with the stress that tends to occur when one's role, targets, achievements and decisions are not always measurable or clear.

Gender is also a key issue here. It clearly pervades much that these two women do as they train people for authorised and formal ministry within the context of the Church of England. As educators actively engaged in theological reflection, they are aware of the impact of gender on their own ministries and lives and understand the issues raised by gender in the broader context of ministry within which those they train will eventually work.

The experience of person, process and context in leadership

In this concluding part of the chapter, we return to the 14 case studies²⁹. In doing so we discover that for these women, their experience of leadership seems to centre around three core dimensions - *person, process and context*.

How the women experience the *person* in leadership

We begin this part of the discussion with an exploration of how the women in this study manage their roles, in the public and private spheres, to discover something about the extent to which they are able to be themselves within their roles.

Generally, the women in this study reported they were *comfortable in their roles* and felt that their roles were what they had expected when they applied for them. Lois and Tabitha observed that leadership could be lonely and that church leaders needed to be self reliant and able to handle significant demands and opposition. However, only Ruth and Phoebe felt isolated and unable to be as open as they would have liked to be about developing their roles. Interestingly, they were two (of only three) women who were working in a diocese with a different bishop from the one who had encouraged them to apply for the senior post. Phoebe, in particular, seemed to struggle with a lack of support and consequently the role seemed to weigh heavily on her³⁰.

In the discussion about role, gender also emerges as an issue. For example, Mary, Ruth, Phoebe and Damaris all noted they were seen explicitly as "women" leaders, although this was generally regarded as positive in that they were described as a "breath of fresh air". Julia believed that one should be seen in role primarily for what one *brings to the role* rather than because of gender, and observed how sometimes

²⁹ Although a summary of each case study is provided earlier in this Chapter, this section draws on the full case studies and includes data derived from the original interviews, each woman's list of constructs, rankings and Self Characterisations. As discussed in Chapter 2, because the interviews take the form of Repertory Grids, where important themes (constructs) emerge which are then rated against various situations, people and ideals, the results are rarely given in the more traditional form of quotes from interviews.

³⁰ Perhaps unsurprisingly she moved in 2011 to work as an Archdeacon in a different diocese.

the role can be helpful, in the same way that wearing clerical robes helps you to be seen primarily as a priest or Archdeacon, rather than as a woman.

A number of the women commented on how their *roles were viewed by others*, particularly in relation to accountability and affirmation of their roles, identifying the need for key people who affirm and value one's leadership and skills, giving feedback and providing accountability (Lois, Ruth, Elisabeth, Keren, Sarah, Julia). For example, Keren feels that because her gifts are valued and recognised, this enables her to exercise authority, to feel that others have discerned her role as a leader and frees her to have a broader sense of what her role might mean. In contrast, Ruth felt she needed more encouragement as a leader in order to develop as a "person in role"; she emphasised how a lack of clarity about one's role can cause stress and speculated that perhaps women were more willing or aware about highlighting this lack of clarity. Sarah and Elisabeth stressed the importance of *accountability* and *having others to give primary support*, as well as help shape self and role, without which it could feel like working in a vacuum. For example, although Elisabeth was aware that her bishop generally affirmed her in her role, she still struggled with how to emerge as a leader in her own right; this of course can be a crucial issue for those who are directly appointed by a bishop, as many of these women have been. Accountability is also crucial to Julia and she suggests that these key relationships need to be characterised by honesty. Chloe identifies the tensions that are inherent in this because whilst she knows that it is important to get her voice heard and be prepared to challenge where necessary, she also needs to win the trust of other senior people and has to rely on them to see her potential and skills.

Consequently, *managing one's public role*, being represented accurately and fairly, and there being as close a fit as possible between how others see you and you see yourself as a leader, was an issue for many of the women. In particular, though, it was an issue for the two Cathedral Deans and two Theological Educators. Mary believed that managing her public role was more of an issue for women. Whereas men can just be "in role" (which is an amalgamation of all the men who have done the role in the past) women are more noticed individually as the "person in the role". For example, she

recounts an experience where she was giving a public theological lecture: one senior (male) colleague commented on what she was wearing and another speculated on her personality type, but neither referred to what she had said in the lecture!³¹ Hannah also remarked that it did sometimes take a lot of courage to manage one's public role, as it was not easy to discover how one should do it, as there was little reference base for "pioneering women".

As noted in the previous section, Sarah was acutely aware that as well as "managing one's public role" there is the issue of *how to manage oneself in a public role*. Consequently, she felt that having "liberty in understanding of vocation" was vital. Similarly, Damaris noted the importance of there being integrity about vocation. Being a woman in a senior role invited a number of assumptions, including it being seen as a "route to the top or as a potential bishop", which can mean there is a lack of openness about the next step. Conversely, she also observed that the role itself enabled it to be a testing ground for future leadership in the church.

Most of the Archdeacons talked about how important it was for there to be a *match between life and action* (Damaris), to be able to *be yourself*, to be seen as "me, as I really am", rather than preconceptions being made about them, fulfilling a projected role (Julia, Keren, Phoebe Naomi) or "wearing a mask" (Hannah).³² Naomi also expressed that she wanted her inner reality, her person, challenged by her role too. Neither of the two Cathedral Deans mentioned the importance of having a match between life and action, however, both were aware that they were often seen *symbolically* and that there was a huge amount of historic expectation and assumption attached to their wide-reaching roles. Sarah believed that as long as this was not too focused on her as an individual it could be good for the mission of the church, in the sense that the Cathedral is iconic. Consequently, therefore, it may be either that the

³¹ Davidson and Cooper observe that dress is one example of the issue of how women are more 'visible' and therefore get noticed more when they are in senior roles. Although, as we shall see later, such visibility can work to a women's advantage, for example, when they get noticed for how they dealt with a particular situation, the reverse is true when it is used to characterise women in ways that are contrary to their self perceptions or intended purposes, as it was in this instance (1992, p.85).

³² Avis notes that because roles relate both to personality and are human creations within a social context, problems can occur if there is too great a discrepancy between the expectations and requirements of the role and the 'person' (1992, p.56).

role is so big the Deans do not concern themselves too much with the extent to which they are themselves in role, and/or that they both have many years' experience as senior leaders and they simply 'inhabit' the role. To a lesser extent this was also true of the two Theological Educators, Lois and Mary, although their focus, as we saw earlier, was more on managing the public perception of their roles.

Thus far, in our discussion about managing one's role and being able to be yourself as a leader, a number of significant threads have emerged. We have discovered that how others see them in their roles is important to them, especially in relation to accountability and support. They also desire a match between who they are as people and how they exercise their roles in the public domain.

We thus arrive at our first core dimension of leadership for these women:

Managing the ROLE - Being *yourself* as a leader

How the women experience the *process* in leadership

We next consider the personal and relational aspects in how leadership was undertaken, including how the women in this study, rather than being concerned with issues of authority or influence per se, regarded agency or the ability to take action as being fundamental to their exercise of leadership.

Being trustworthy and having *integrity in relationships* was the most important personal characteristic in the exercise of leadership. Elisabeth and Chloe argued that although leadership was conferred or given it also had to be earned. Essential to this earning of leadership and "winning trust", was understanding leadership as a process involving growth, increasing self-awareness, reflection and learning from experience (Naomi, Phoebe, Mary, Julia, Damaris, Hannah).³³ Lois described it as, "something innate but also an ongoing process of understanding and accepting who I am as a leader", Julia as, "a process seeking growth" and Sarah suggested that how she shapes her diary *and* how she shapes her life should be regarded as a work in progress. This

³³ Grint argues that the ability to learn from those who 'follow' us is crucial to learning from experience, and that it is this 'inverse learning' that teaches people to be leaders (2005, p.102).

involves the “courage to take risks and live dangerously” (Lois), being “careful about boundaries” (Keren) and “not conforming to other’s expectations” (Damaris).

Elisabeth was one of the few women to talk explicitly about models of leadership: “A biblical/theological model of leadership embraces flaws and glory, failure and success, warts and all. It includes calling, vocation and recognising Christ as a leader. Leadership in Christ is modelled on a ‘person’ and therefore it is hopeful. This is perhaps why God calls ‘less obvious’ people.”

Despite not using the language of models to talk about leadership, many of the women discussed the importance of having some sort of vision of *how I want to be as a leader* (Naomi, Phoebe). For example, someone who is determined and hard working (Ruth), competent (Damaris),³⁴ as well as caring (Hannah), collaborative, collegial and enabling consensus (Hannah, Sarah, Phoebe, Ruth). Ruth and Phoebe also stressed the value of there being openness in thinking about what a good leader is and having the freedom to question. That is, to *do* things differently (Elisabeth), as well as the freedom to *be* a different kind of leader (Phoebe, Mary). An instance of this might be asking questions rather than giving advice (Phoebe). However, Chloe’s Self Characterisation revealed how this can lead to a number of tensions; for example, she was trying to do “the job in the way that it was expected” and yet she also wanted to do things differently and not be “stuffy”. Sometimes these two things were not compatible. Phoebe too observes that working in a more collegial way can sometimes be challenging for other people.

The issue of whether women *exercise leadership in a different way from men* came up on a number of occasions, although most questioned whether women really did things differently, or whether it was more to do with personality, or even a lack of understanding of their role (Ruth). As previously noted in her Case Study, Damaris argued that although being a woman was a factor in her appointment she now believed she was primarily seen in her role as a senior leader. However, she also questions whether some of the reasons she was approached in the first place, such as

³⁴ Although competence in itself is not sufficient for the exercise of authority, Avis argues that it is a necessary condition in order for authority to be credible or ‘rational’ (1992, p.99).

her relational skills, being a problem solver and negotiator, are more due to personality rather than because she is a woman. Whatever the truth of the matter, this is she chooses to emphasise these skills in her work, rather than, "laying down the law, imposing, or by the direct use of power".³⁵ Keren believes the role defines leadership, not gender, but she also argues that she inhabits her role in a different way, for example, "...she leads alongside as well as in front; challenge has to go alongside support. Women 'do' faith, encouraging, enabling, differently from men but you cannot always put your finger on it. Women give away authority and maybe are more relational."³⁶

Phoebe observes that there is a tension between trying to work towards a more complementary way of working, where men and women perhaps contribute different things, without colluding with existing structures or falling into gender stereotypical ways of working. For example, because she is regarded as being good with people she tends to get given "pastoral stuff", consequently working towards a wholeness that comes from a properly understood sense of complementarity requires a great deal of courage to put into practice.

A number of the women discussed the importance of *looking at the wider picture*. Lois puts it thus:

"A leader needs to be able to 'scan the horizon', to determine priorities but at the same time always be wary of closing off options. Management is more about focusing on immediate priorities - today or next week. Leadership is also about helping others to feel more secure in an uncertain and dangerous environment."

Sarah thought it was vital to identify and focus on the important things, rather than just react. Naomi too argued that it was important to be seen as someone who would develop creative solutions to issues rather than just respond, and Hannah believed that if too much time was given to smaller tasks this could end up leading to chaos.

Another key aspect in taking a wider view was the necessity of developing potential in

³⁵ Adler observes that rather than relying on traditional, hierarchical or structural support, women tend to use and cultivate broadly based popular support (1999, p.259).

³⁶ None of the women talked explicitly about "power". However, if we take Avis' definition of authority as being a form of power where "compliance is willingly given" (1992, p.23), then the sorts of power that seem to be most in evidence here is the "distributive" described by Percy (2010, p.120), and the "persuasive" power identified by Greenleaf (1988, p.85). That is, using one's authority to facilitate shared goals.

others, being a role model (Hannah), identifying gifts and “encouraging risk taking into leadership” (Lois).

The *ability to bring about change and to take action*³⁷ was one of the most important constructs for all of the women in this study and for the Archdeacons it constituted the bulk of their constructs.

Rather than "keeping things going in the same way", "being salt", "having influence, being a figurehead", for Phoebe, Ruth and Mary, "taking action", "having agency" and the "ability to make a difference", were their most important constructs. However, this needed coupling with the freedom to fail and the necessity for women to learn how to fail.³⁸

Julia likes to be involved in setting vision but to be a good leader she believes one must “make things happen” and be able to “do” and be seen as “doing”. Naomi puts this in terms of being creative and visionary, bringing into being things that do not exist; “there must always be the possibility, the hope of change...” Elisabeth, Julia and Hannah also emphasise the importance of making things happen, effecting change and moving things on. Elisabeth puts it like this: “Although there can be wisdom in the muddle you need to bring about change as people are looking for resolution”; and Hannah believes that helping to bring dreams into reality is what leadership is all about.

Tabitha’s Self Characterisation reveals that as a woman, enabling significant change to happen and “just getting on with it” has been crucial for her. She has been able to “turn something around”, despite lots of difficulties. She describes herself as a transformer and an enabler.

Elisabeth thinks that it is important that one’s authority is, "acknowledged and confirmed, rather than undermined, over ridden or subsumed by other parallel agendas", even though in reality she believes that the Archdeacon role has very little authority. However, Lois believes the capacity to take authority, even when it is not

³⁷ This is slightly at odds with Percy’s assertion that although most senior clergy go into ministry to "influence" rather than "seek power", for the women in this study it was the "ability" to take action that was most significant (2010, p.123). Indeed, for Mary, "influence" was on the *opposite* end of her construct about taking action.

³⁸ Middleton emphasises this too. Leaders need to be open to learn from those they lead, be open to new ways of thinking, to sometimes move "beyond authority" and adopt new practices, to take risks and therefore, to be prepared to fail too (2007, p.76).

given formally, and the willingness to take the initiative, have a go, and thus to live authentically and confidently, are essential in leadership, especially for women.

The willingness to take action and *getting on with the job* was perceived to be important for the church too (Ruth), however, for Damaris and Elisabeth this focus on "doing" is somewhat problematic. For example, although Damaris believes that leadership involves being competent and taking action, and that she is seen as someone who has those skills, she wants above all else to inhabit her role with integrity. She believes though that the church focuses primarily on skills and evidence in leadership, on what can be observed, sometimes to the detriment of ministerial and leadership formation. Elisabeth too wants her leadership to be both functional and inspirational. However, she regards her present leadership to be primarily functional, but rather confusingly does not seem to regard this as a priority for herself or for the church, even though this is somewhat at odds with her belief that leadership should be more concerned with spiritual growth and the mission of the church.

All of the women in this study essentially share the aspiration that leadership should be inspirational as well as functional. However, as we have seen, especially for those who are leading from the "second chair"³⁹ (primarily the Archdeacons), the focus has to be on getting on with it, taking action and attempting to make a difference. This ability to bring about change, to do and to be seen as doing, is vital but integral to this is 'how' they are leaders, as people with integrity, who can be trusted in relationships characterised by inclusion and openness.

Perhaps this is best summarised as "agency with communion".⁴⁰ In addition, the women see leadership as part of a process of ongoing learning, which includes developing the ability to "scan the horizon" and be able to look at the bigger picture.

³⁹ "Leading from the second chair" is a term coined by Bonem and Patterson, and it refers to the challenges faced by those who, although are in leadership positions and have significant influence within an organisation, are not in overall charge (2005, p.2). Essentially, they argue that leading from the second chair is about finding your way through a set of three paradoxes and living with both ends of those paradoxes. The first paradox is that you are a leader and yet also a subordinate (p.27), the second is called the deep-wide paradox (p.71), and the third paradox is about being content with the present without losing a sense of the future (p.121).

⁴⁰ Marshall (1993) argues that male leaders tend to be more associated with "agency" and women leaders with "communion" as their "basic strategy" (2007, p.17), however, later she uses the phrase "communion enhanced by agency" (p.75). For the women in this study, it seems to be the other way round, "agency enhanced by communion".

Sarah thus suggests that the leadership role needs to be strategic and functional, and the landscape of mission requires it to be collegial.

In many ways they recognise that although they sometimes feel, as women, they are leading from the edge or from the margins, this can be actually be a place of power (Willhauck and Thorpe, 2001, p.30), or at the very least a place where there are opportunities for doing things differently and perhaps more creatively. The women in this study look at the wider picture, make connections, work hard at fostering good relationships, herald change and take action, sometimes moving beyond the formal authority they are given, in quite significant ways to fulfil their roles.

The second core dimension of leadership for these women is:

Having AGENCY - Being a *relational* leader

How the women experience the *context* in leadership

The final part of this discussion explores the *context* of leadership, how the women engage with the predominately male structures of the church and in particular how the context is experienced from the *gender* perspective of women.

All of the Archdeacons talked about the importance of being willing to learn about and be able to *work within the structures* of the church. Included in this was the necessity of understanding, accepting and rediscovering the radical nature of tradition and, at the same time, being willing to challenge.⁴¹ Ruth expressed this as a desire to be a “critical friend” to the institution rather than simply someone who was “critical”, although she also recognised that there were tensions inherent in this, particularly when one is new to the role, when there was a need to conform and prove oneself. Hannah and Ruth suggested that they were able to “sit lightly” to their job descriptions and structures because a primary commitment and focus on people gave them the confidence to be able to challenge and to voice criticism within the structures. Sarah observed that although it is possible to be empowered through tradition⁴², the

⁴¹ Interestingly, Ruether and McLaughlin observe that, “...women operating from the stance of ‘radical obedience’, rather than dissent who are likely to make a greater impact on their male colleagues, for their claims cannot be so easily rejected” (1979, p.19).

⁴² Marshall suggests that when faced with a powerful system of norms the most helpful strategy is to explore the existing tradition and then develop a new base of values from which to accept or reject norms and values independently and generate new options (1993, p. 87).

predominant models in church leadership, chief executive or servant, have not been helpful in developing her gifts and potentials as a woman.

As well as being able to work effectively within the structures, another important strand was *making the structures work for you*, by having the skills to mould them. Sarah observed that although the church needed structures because it was dependent on its own quality assurance, one needed to be active and skilled in relation to the structures; taking responsibility for shaping the role in a way that makes the structures work for you and enable a wholesome institution (Lois). Thus, there appears to be a distinction between the particular role the women held and their relationship with the structures. The Cathedral Deans and Theological Educators focused on developing the skills to mould and shape the structures, whereas the Archdeacons wanted to work within the structures but also challenge them when necessary.

The results also revealed that gender was not only a key issue in itself, but something that permeated through the discussion of leadership was construed. Interestingly, even those who suggested that gender was no longer an issue talked about it quite a lot. For example, when Tabitha was appointed in 2000 she felt very much “on her own” but now felt gender was not a significant factor in leadership because it was much more “normal” to have women in these roles (although the reality is that women still account for less than 10% of Cathedral Deans). Like Abigail, who has been in a senior role for more than 8 years, it seems that the fact that they are no longer the only woman, means they assume that more recently appointed women will not feel this pressure and that *women’s experience of senior leadership is now normative*⁴³. Having been able to break through the barriers they have encountered, they believe that women following them into other senior posts will not have any difficulty doing the same.

However, for the other twelve women in this study, gender a key issue for themselves, others around them and the church as a whole. Many of the women, like Sarah, dislike being seen symbolically, or specifically as a woman, rather than simply as priests or

⁴³ This was indeed the reason given by the one woman in a senior role at the time of this study who said she did not have time to be interviewed nor provide any information.

leaders; however they seem to have largely set this aside in order to get on with the task of being leaders.⁴⁴ Mary also sees herself explicitly as a "woman leader" but feels this is because of how others "set it up". For example, she has often heard, "You're the first woman to ... therefore ..."

Phoebe was somewhat unusual because although *being seen explicitly as a woman leader* was her least important construct, she believes that it is the most important one for the church. Consequently, this impacts on all her other constructs which are to do with how she does the job, so for example, "having to rethink the role", "doing things differently", "sharing oversight", "openness", all follow because she is a woman but then paradoxically she regards these significant constructs for her as being less important for the church. Therefore, it seems that although she regards gender as the most important issue for the church, she also believes that it is not a high priority for the church.

Such thinking is probably not surprising given the *mixed messages* and sometimes seemingly conflicting attitudes the women experience about their leadership. These mixed messages take a number of forms. For example, a number of the women observed that although bishops and other senior male leaders like to appoint women, they still seem to regard these appointments as more risky and that "their necks are on the line" too. Mary recounts that after being encouraged to apply for (and getting) a senior post in another diocese, she was told by her diocesan bishop, "This is a big job, people will be watching you, don't mess up ... don't let us (the church, men, me, bishop) down". As a result, it is perhaps unsurprising that a number of the women felt that they could not "afford to fail" and that if they did it would make it more difficult to appoint a woman to that role in the future. Ruth however, feels that it is important that women unlearn their *fear of failure* and Lois too suggests that women have to be prepared to keep taking risks, which can sometimes lead to failure. Another situation in which mixed messages are received is in the context of meetings where women sometimes wonder whether their voices are heard. Ruth and Chloe both cited times when their suggestions were ignored but taken up later in the

⁴⁴ This accords with the results of my MFS outlined in Chapter 1 (Rees, 2007, p.67).

meeting after a male colleague had made the same suggestion. Ruth reported feeling uncomfortable sometimes about the way in which other *women were talked about in staff meetings*. For instance, when women who have requested part time or flexible working patterns are, "assumed to be uncommitted" or fixed in their understanding of vocation. Hannah felt she did have a "voice at the table" but that as well as this needing courage, it often felt like hitting a "marzipan ceiling", and to exercise her role was "... difficult and therefore quite costly personally".

Women who get to senior positions in the church are often in a dilemma that Mary articulates well. On one hand, she feels grateful to the men in senior positions who have enabled her (and other women) to get their senior posts and yet, at the same time, she knows this is "paternalistic and patronising". The women are aware that they need to earn the trust of other senior colleagues (often including those who have appointed them) and yet have to rely on them to fulfil potential, develop skills and receive feedback (Chloe).

Another challenge was the *assumptions made about role because of gender*. Mary feels she carries the weight of expectation of being the first woman to ... and, as Sarah noted, this can lead to a variety of pressures including not being able to explore vocation openly. Julia describes carrying such expectations as a "responsibility" and suggests that good leadership is still mostly defined by *masculine traits* and characteristics, where men are automatically respected because of their good history and experience (Elisabeth). Tabitha observes that people will often question whether a woman knows "how to do the job well enough". Phoebe often feels that she is trying to fit into a "male shaped role" that does not reflect her own gospel values.⁴⁵ A number of the Archdeacons noticed that there was a tendency for men to be *polarised in their working relationships* with women, to try to find similarities or differences, rather than for it to be normal (Julia).

⁴⁵ Maddock observes that all organisational cultures are gendered and argues that organisations will only develop when the power of 'gender cultures' is acknowledged and challenged by both women and men (1999, p.40).

Mary, Ruth and Naomi all observe that because there are relatively few women in these roles, women get more “observed” and, as Naomi puts it, “... because I’m a woman, it ‘flags up’ differences so that other differences get noticed”. Consequently, a man in the same role is perceived as having more freedom as there is more of an overarching archetype into which differences are incorporated (Ruth).

Conversely, most of the women also noticed that there were some advantages to their being in these senior roles. The most frequently mentioned advantage was the openness and *freedom to inhabit the role* in their own way, rather than living with the assumptions or comparisons of others (Ruth, Keren, Elisabeth, Hannah); whereas Mary noted that men may be constrained by a collective understanding and therefore have to fit into an “amalgamated role”. Lois believes that she can “live more dangerously” than other people expect, for example, by taking risks with appointments because, as Sarah also observed, sometimes you get given the benefit of the doubt or, conversely, if you do something well, it may get you noticed!⁴⁶

Julia observed that because the Archdeacon role was quite clearly defined she was not seen so explicitly as a woman in her role; however, she also believes that, “... having a woman in this role effects how leadership is perceived - it serves as a symbolic function - it’s about presence, not about words. It’s about having a seat at the table which makes other clergy aware that there *are* women in senior leadership positions.” She also felt that with both male and female colleagues she had to make it clear that although she was there, “at the table”, she was there as an Archdeacon and not as someone who was there to represent women. Sarah also reported that generally, *women “at the table” are seen positively* but she is aware that she often gets used as a change agent. Hannah mentioned that some reading around women in the boardroom

⁴⁶ Where there are few women in senior roles, Davidson and Cooper note they are subject to three tendencies, namely those associated with visibility, contrast and assimilation. Some disadvantages include women feeling they need to demonstrate their competence, being used as a test case for future women at a senior level, the lack of female role models and sometimes a distortion of women’s behaviour by others in order to fit them into pre-existing stereotypes. Thus, any gender related differences tend to reinforce boundaries which already exist. They note too, however, that some women enjoy the visibility and some make it work for them (1992, p.84).

had been helpful for her. Ruth concurred with this and said one of the other useful things for her had been meeting senior women in business and in other professions.⁴⁷ The women in this study were well aware that they are appointed for a variety of reasons - as symbols, as tokens, as a trophy, as change agents - as well as for their skills, experience and proven track record but, despite the challenges they face, generally they agreed that having women at the table was crucial for the church. Intentionally or not, accurately or not, helpfully or not, the women felt that *gender was still a very significant issue* for themselves, those they worked with and the church generally, even if they attempted to set it aside somewhat and tried just to get on with things.

In addition, although they are aware that they are appointed for a variety of reasons, not all laudable, they were unanimous that it was crucial for women to be “at the table”, becoming increasingly visible and willing to speak. Ruth’s recounted that her appointment to her current role (by a diocesan bishop) was followed a few months later by the appointment (by the same bishop) of a man opposed to the ordination of women to the senior leadership team in the diocese, “to balance things up”. This perhaps illustrates that the appointment of women to senior leadership positions in the church is very far from yet being “normal”, or a non-issue.

Our third core dimension of leadership for these women is therefore:

Engaging with the STRUCTURES - Being a *woman* leader

⁴⁷ Shaw notes that whilst it is clearly an advantage for women to be included in the hierarchy of the church, in that they will often have new perspectives on things and are prepared to challenge and question existing structures, it can also be difficult for women in two ways. Those who are supportive of change will often have overly high expectations, and those who are fearful of change will often react with hostility, thus women are often caught between, “...attacks and expectations, with little room to be themselves” (2010, p.87).

Conclusions: Key themes and issues from the empirical research

In this section of the chapter, we attempt to draw together the various angles from which the results have been presented in order to summarise the key perspectives and insights thus far. We do this by looking generally at the collective data, then at those things that the women identified as being helpful in their roles and finally by focusing on the main themes emerging from the case studies.

Firstly, from the general collective data we can make a number of observations. The 14 women range in age from mid 40s to over 60; they come from a variety of backgrounds and roles into their current leadership positions. Most have had previous significant management/leadership experience in the church or in other professions. Six of them are single, eight are married and only four of the married women have children. Three have been in post for less than two years and one for over 11 years. Eleven out of the 14 were either "asked to apply" or were appointed directly by the diocesan bishop, and only three gave vocation or calling as the main reason for applying for their post. This high number of women effectively appointed by bishops to senior roles leads to the dilemma that Mary expresses - that although she is grateful to the senior men who have helped her get her role, she also realises that this can be "paternalistic and patronising"; it certainly has implications for ongoing collegial relationships and personal development as a leader. Most of the women reported that the role was what they expected and said that they were enjoying them, even though they often found them challenging. Some seemed rather surprised to be enjoying their roles. Many of the women commented, "I try to be me in my role as much as possible".

Secondly, the women identified a number of things, which help them in their leadership roles. One of the key areas here was spirituality, and as well as recognising the importance of a relationship with God, many of the women highlighted the value of belonging to a worshipping community. The authority of role, including being both visible and heard, was significant too, as was having a balanced life, with friends and

family who would challenge as well as support. Also appreciated were an ability to build on experience coupled with training (including skills and knowledge), opportunities to be involved in various aspects of church life, and access to experienced advisors, "friendly critics" and other networks. A further crucial aspect was experiencing constructive relationships with supportive and trustworthy colleagues, particularly senior colleagues who were "available", as well as clarity of role and structures. Most of the women also mentioned the importance of having women friends, peers and role models.

Thirdly, a number of key themes emerged from the case studies and the collated constructs. In brief, these encompassed comments about the church as an institution, the exercise of leadership, and how the role was inhabited; permeating all of this was the issue of gender. Two key questions in relation to gender were articulated, one by Phoebe who asks how one can work in complementary ways with men and other colleagues and yet not collude with gender stereotypes; the other by Sarah about how to find a helpful model of leadership based on Christian tradition but which does not diminish women's gifts and calling. The women are aware that they are seen explicitly as *women leaders* and as such are more observed. They also know that they are viewed symbolically, that they are used as change agents, and that this produces both opportunities and challenges.

In relation to the church, the main points raised were to do with tradition, structures and vocation. For example, the extent to which tradition could be used to empower or disempower women, the scope for working within the structures but reshaping and rethinking leadership, and how much freedom women had to develop their vocations and roles free from the expectations of others, both inside and outside the church. This discussion encompassed the importance of having clarity and understanding of the role, as well as being able to be oneself within it, and reflecting on how best to manage the public aspect. In this study, leadership was viewed as "a process seeking growth" involving openness as well as "taking authority" and "making decisions for the future"; but paramount for all the women was having integrity in relationships and the "ability to make a difference".

Although in many ways the key perspectives that have been identified in this chapter overlap and are interdependent, as we have progressed through the results we have also been able to see how the three aspects in our definition of leadership, *context*, *process* and *person*, have been confirmed and become both increasingly obvious and more focused.

The context is unmistakably a gendered context and the issue becomes about how, as a women in a senior position, one engages with the structures of the church within that context. The principal insight arising from our exploration of the process of leadership is about the importance of agency, the ability to take action and bring about change. However, this matters little to the women unless their leadership also demonstrates relationships of integrity that are honest and inclusive. Finally, the women in this study reflect deeply on their roles, considering both how they can be themselves in their roles and how they to manage their public roles, in a way that is life giving and transformative for themselves and others.

In summary, our three core dimensions of leadership for these women involve:

Managing the ROLE- Being *yourself* as a leader

Having AGENCY - Being a *relational* leader

Engaging with the STRUCTURES - Being a *woman* leader

Chapter Four

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

This concluding chapter splits into three sections. The first section evaluates the usefulness of Personal Construct Psychology for exploring issues of ministry in the church. Second, we turn one more time to the results produced by the use of PCP, particularly with regard to the Self Characterisations and Repertory Grid Interviews. The results of both the Ministry Focused Study (MFS) and this Research Based Thesis (RBT) are summarised and connections made. Thirdly, we make some general observations about the research findings; and briefly explore three significant questions that the research has generated:

Can 'Servant Leadership' be a good model for women?

Can tradition be a resource for women?

Is simply having more women enough?

Finally, we ask whether women in senior leadership positions, really can, 'boldly go'?

Is Personal Construct Psychology a useful tool?

As both a Christian minister and a professional psychologist, I wanted to choose a methodology that would, "... promote an integrative framework that is both psychologically and theologically sound" (Entwistle, 2004, p.2). Methodologies, which enable an integrative approach, are relatively rare. Personal Construct Psychology (PCP), I believe, provides a framework that honours both the practice of ministry and psychology, and in addition, is intellectually sound. We noted earlier that Personal Construct Psychology has been used in a number of different contexts. However, rarely, if ever, has it been used, as it has in these two studies, to explore ministry and leadership in a church context. It would therefore be pertinent here to evaluate its usefulness in this context.

In brief, PCP is about people, it regards people themselves as the scientists, who rather than just 'reacting' are able to construct meaning for themselves from the situations and 'events' that make up their worlds. It is reflexive and not imposed in any sense. The theory of PCP is given in very abstract terms and thus it is not essentially dependent (or limited by) time or culture; it is also 'upfront' about the assumptions the theory makes.

The use of a Repertory Grid Interview, whilst different in some ways from a traditional interview was familiar enough for those involved to feel comfortable with the approach. It also provided a way of discovering something about people's subjective views of ministry and leadership. The Grid Interview also enabled the researcher to find the important issues as well as finding out something about the relative weight with which people held the things that they considered important. It was therefore possible to understand something about how the women constructed meaning rather than simply reporting or reproducing what they said (Chiari and Nuzzo, 2003, p.49). As Fromm observes, "One of the unique features of the grid technique is that while it allows a very flexible and sensitive approach to the subject's personal world, at the same time it provides structured data which facilitates analysis and interpretation" (2004, p.7).

One of the intentions of PCP was as a therapeutic tool that would not only give people understanding but would also help them to grow and change. PCP has a holistic, dynamic and hopeful view of the person as someone who is continually trying to understand and make meaning of their world (Butt and Burr, 2004, p.7, 34). This process of change is encouraged by enabling people to find new ways of looking at old problems (Fransella, 2005, p.106), and applies as much to the researcher/therapist as it does to the client.

Jesus, in his use of parables, stories and questions, also encourages people to look at problems and situations in new and different ways. Theology is about the transformation of individuals, groups, communities, institutions and societies based on a relationship with God (Sedmak, 2005, p.69).⁴⁸ Alternatively, as Miroslav Volf expresses it: "The mission of Jesus consisted not simply in *re-naming* the behaviour ... but also in *re-making* the people ..." (1996, p.73). What this research attempts to do therefore is not simply to find out more about these women as leaders, but to discover something about how they live, make sense of and create meaning in their leadership roles, in a way that enables them to continue being reflective practitioners and 're-

⁴⁸ However, despite this common ground there is a scarcity of literature in which theology and psychology are used in an equal partnership to explore this theme of transformation. One of the few studies that attempts to do this in a systematic way is that by Everett and Bachmeyer. They coin the term "reciprocal transformation" to describe the process (1979, p.228).

makers' of themselves and of those they relate to. PCP respects and values people as co-explorers, scientists, travellers in making meaning. This is consistent with Sedmak's idea that "good theology", the theology in which Jesus engages, is done, "as if people matter"(2002, p.33).

Kelly clearly values both religion and science in helping to make sense of life (Fransella and Neimeyer, 2003, p. 24-25; Warren, 2003, p. 387). His discussion about "man as scientist" is given within the context of the "priesthood of all believers" (Kelly, 1991, p.4), and his "dynamic view of the person", (Butt and Burr, 2004, p.7) is underpinned by his understanding of what "free will" might mean (Kelly, 1991, p.14ff). PCP allows the space for such a dialogue; it enables individual voices to be heard, as well as a group narrative, in a way that gives integrity to those different voices and is consistent with public academic knowledge. An understanding of context is important in any research but as Bevans (2006) argues, when we are 'doing' theology, it is essential (p.9). Of course, it is possible to elevate the context as being more important than the tradition itself, and this pitfall needs to be borne in mind; however, as Bevans notes, "... even more dangerous is a theology that speaks to no one, that has no power because it has no real audience" (p.24). In fact, he goes further than this, to argue that all "genuine theology" is developed within a specific context (p.109). Kelly's emphasis on the 'usefulness' of context in providing information and understanding is somewhat different. However, taking account of the context is also important for Kelly. He suggests that when people identify constructs, or use particular words to talk about something, we need to look beyond the words and heed the context in order to really understand meaning (1991, p.189).

The most obvious issue in using PCP in any kind of empirical research is the relative complexity of the theory. Although PCP is one of the research methods outlined by Cohen et al. (2000) in a book about general research methods in education, Kelly acknowledged that, in his theory, many of the "familiar landmarks of psychology" would be missing (Fransella and Neimeyer, 2003, p.25). Kelly's theory, *The Psychology of Personal Constructs*, outlined in two volumes of over 1000 pages was initially written for his students, in a clinical setting and thus is perhaps more for the specialist. The prospect of reading and understanding his two-volume exposition has led to the

popularising of his theory and the consequent tendency to push personal construct theory into a cognitive framework, missing the nuances of the theory. Kelly recognised that most people's construing happened at the level of the unconscious, with conscious construing and its associated verbal labels occurring only the highest level of awareness (op. cit., 2003, p.29). In addition, as Kelly himself recognises, the philosophical stance he takes, that all facts are subject to alternate constructions, can be seen as somewhat threatening, subjective and even subversive, to those who believe that their perception of truth is unalterable (Fransella 2003, p.7/8).

However, with some attention to the underlying philosophy, his theory does enable others to "step inside" the views of those they seek to understand. Consequently, Kelly's theory, with its focus on alternative perspectives, inherently respects individual and cultural differences. Clearly, Kelly does have values but the theory, "enjoins us to deal with the question of values by both recognising values implicit in our own core constructs, and attempting, in so far as possible, to accord equal legitimacy to the value perspectives of those persons we seek to comprehend" (Fransella and Neimeyer, 2003, p.27). Personal Construct Psychology, particularly repertory grid technique, gives a creative and flexible way of doing research. It allows qualitative data to be quantified but at the same time exploits the richness of the raw qualitative data, for example, Self Characterisations as narrative. It enables the, "bringing to light the distinctive ways that individual human beings or groups organise and interpret some aspect of their experience" (Fransella and Neimeyer, 2003, p.31). Themes of choice and agency pervade Kelly's theory and he viewed the ability for construing the outlooks of others as vital for meaningful relationships. He brings together a number of different disciplines and influences to generate a complete, reasoned, practical and reflexive theory; one that is still being actively elaborated (Bannister, 2003, p.35; Fransella and Neimeyer, 2003, p.27).

Personal Construct Psychology, therefore, through the use of Repertory Grids and Self Characterisations, has proved to be helpful in discovering something about how the women in these studies, as individuals, as a group of incumbents or senior leaders, and as people inhabiting particular roles in the church, construe their ministries and leadership.

The two studies

This thesis has investigated the issue of why more women do not apply for senior positions in the church from both ends.

The Ministry Focused Study looked at the perspective of women incumbents, who are the pool of women from whom those in senior roles will be selected and the largest group of visible women in a diocese who are exercising leadership roles. Then in the Research Based Thesis, we approached the issue from the standpoint of those who are already in senior positions in the church.

So ... how do women incumbents make meaning of their ministry? How do senior women make sense of the leadership roles? How do they "place an interpretation", how do they distinguish things and events? How do these women construe and what difference might it make? We end where we began by summarising both the MFS and RBT.

An exploration of how a group of women incumbents construe their ministry (Ministry Focused Study)

For all the women in the MFS, the connection between person and role, "being able to be the person I really am in role", was important. Ideally, they would also like to be "affirmed" in their roles, as this would enable them to be more confident in their ministries; however, this was not essential. Undoubtedly, they felt that each individual woman had to "carry the weight", the "responsibility", for the reputation for women's ministry as a whole. Consequently, the women did not feel that they had much "freedom to fail".

Whilst they believed that were able to have a positive impact on people's lives they did not see themselves as able to affect significant change. Most struggled with holding together both the desire to be "comfortable" in their ministries, with a feeling of being "uncomfortable" about how women's ministry was regarded generally by the church. Overall, the women sought to work collaboratively although a number also identified that "collaboration" could also be used to "cover up" weak leadership or a lack of confidence. Most though were prepared to take the "risk" of trying to work

collaboratively. They suggested that this was part of working out "new patterns of ministry" within existing structures of church authority.

As long as the women perceived the church to be "on the move" or "on a journey" towards the inclusion of women at all levels, they were patiently "getting on with things" as they waited for change. Although they were content to "work within the structures" they recognised that only "change in the institution of the church would lead to real change".

The diocesan bishop had a key role in how the women understood their ministries and how they related to the diocese and wider church structures. In the parish context, the women believed their ministries were valued. However, the ongoing debate about whether women should be bishops, led them to conclude that this was not a view shared by the church generally. Clearly for the women in this study the ability of women to be allowed to be bishops in the church is an issue that impinges on how they exercise their ministries and how they believe their ministries are valued. Above all else, the women disliked being seen explicitly as "women" priests rather than simply as priests, yet they subsumed this to the bottom of their rankings as being least important to themselves and for the church. How they would feel now in light of the recent⁴⁹ rejection of the legislation that would have enabled women to become bishops is a moot question. In addition, given the importance of the close connection, for these women, between person and role one wonders about the personal (and ministerial) cost of such subjugation.

Already, in this Ministry Focused Study we begin to see the emergence of the three core dimensions of person, process and context that become more evident in the main Research Based Thesis.

We now revisit these three dimensions one last time and intersperse the main findings in each with some theory, including some additional perspectives from Personal Construct Psychology.

⁴⁹ General Synod of the Church of England December 2012

How do women in senior positions in the Church of England construe their leadership?

The *Person* of the leader: Managing the Role - Being 'yourself' as leader

The cluster of results around the person of the leader broadly splits into two categories. The first contained personal aspects of leadership including the connection between role/person and the managing of oneself within the role. The second addressed public aspects of leadership, such as managing the public role.

Any discussion of role involves some understanding of what we mean by 'person'. Over time, this understanding has shifted from being about an individual person to being about interrelatedness (von Balthasar, 1986, p.25). In PCP, although Kelly would argue that it was vital to keep individuality, in that people differ from each other in their construction and interpretation of events, the sociality corollary reminds us that when a person construes this is very much within a social context of interrelatedness (Kelly, 1991, p. 68ff; Walker, 1996, p.13). Kelly argues that we do not have constructs, as such, but that construing is a process that determines how we behave and relate to others (in Fransella, 2004, p.7). In other words, 'self' is an awareness of 'who you are' in relation to others and 'role' is the course of action or behaviour that results from how one understands that social process. Roles can come from "intentional actions", a "network of expectations", or by "design and evolution" (Wendel, 2011, p.11). The most effective understanding and integrated view of 'self' is based on the interrelationship between role (what one does) and social process (who one is) (Stets and Burke, 2000, p.224/234).

Generally, the women in this study were comfortable in their roles.

They wanted to be 'themselves' in their roles, with as close a fit as possible between how they are seen by others and how they perceive themselves.

Just as in the MFS, the women in this study wanted there to be a "match" between their lives and roles. This close fit enabled them to inhabit their roles with integrity.

The ability to be 'yourself' in role involves a number of factors, including having a healthy sense of 'self' both as an individual and in relationship with others, these women have. As bishop Penny Jamieson noted, it is only from the "depths" of ourselves that we have anything to offer to the church (1997, p.1). If there is too much differentiation between the role and the person, Wendel observes that it is possible to externalise moral blame onto the role and this can be a danger or, vice versa, the role can carry very little weight, (2011, p.7). A 'person' is of course able to push the boundaries of what a role might be (Stets and Burke, 2000, p.229) but the danger is that the role can push the boundaries of 'person' too, which once again emphasises the need for healthy sense of 'self'.

What the women are looking for is a clear understanding of their roles, in order that there can be a healthy overlap between person and role; they want the role to challenge them as people but without too much weight being given to role, which might result in conformity rather than a willingness to question (Jackson, 1998, p.49). Additionally, as the women in this study noted, roles can also provide protection and authority. There was an acknowledgement that role could be helpful in "giving authority". Where role was the focus there was less emphasis on gender.

The women want to understand and manage themselves within their roles, so that they both can win the trust of others and be able to say challenging things.

There was a recognition that they needed to be self-reliant, able to cope with significant demands and opposition. To get to be one of the relatively few women in senior roles in the church they have had to "prove themselves".

A number of the Archdeacons, in particular, noted that it was sometimes difficult to get the balance right between earning the confidence of others and being able to say tough things. This is made even more difficult by the fact that many of the women were appointed directly or "asked to apply" for their post by their diocesan bishop.

The women value encouragement and honest feedback in developing their roles and their continuing development as people.

However, they wonder how much liberty they have to develop these freed from expectations and assumptions from those in and outside the church.

How one managed, the public role and how one managed oneself in a public role were particular issues for the Cathedral Deans and Theological Educators. For instance, Mary's experience of giving a public theological lecture where the only comments from two senior colleagues who were present focused on she was wearing and her personality type. Another example was the double page newspaper article about Sarah, leading her to ask how much freedom she had to explore her own vocation and the extent to which it was being steered by the media. Phoebe's description of herself as, "... a transformer who has turned a beleaguered, defensive community into an outward facing one, through the supervision (despite opposition) of a £9m building scheme" shows clearly how Cathedral Deans have to operate in a number of different public spheres. They have to see beyond the church to civic and sometimes (inter)national life.

When connected with the question over the extent to which women in senior positions have the "freedom to fail", it is possible to see just how challenging this is for many women. Conversely, Sarah suggested that being viewed symbolically could be positive for the church generally (or for a particular Cathedral), if the spotlight was not too fixed on an individual.

In this study, the dimension, *person of the leader*, therefore includes the connections between person and role, especially being able to 'be yourself' as a leader, as well as managing the role in the public and private spheres. In a sense, the women are "at the crossroads" politically and socially, as they work out their roles (Peterson, 2004, p.118). They need the courage to question, make their voices heard and challenge the role where necessary, so that they have the freedom to develop as people and as leaders.

The *Process* of leadership: Having Agency - Being a 'relational' leader

The women in senior roles had clear ideas about how they wanted to be leaders, suggesting that it was important to look at the wider picture, to make "decisions for the future" and be a "critical friend" to the institution. They sought to make their leadership "functional as well as inspirational".

There was openness to what a good leader might be, as well as the hope that there might be the freedom to be a different kind of leader.

Unlike the incumbents in the MFS who felt they had "little freedom to fail", the women in this study argued that this was an essential part of what leadership should entail. However, they were obviously aware that having little scope for failure was an expectation put upon them by a number of other senior (mostly male) colleagues about them as women. For example, Mary's experience after obtaining a senior post, "This is a big job ... don't let us down".

The women in the MFS believe that whilst they have some impact on "changing people's lives for the better", do not think that they can affect significant change. In contrast, these women in senior positions are primarily interested in "the ability to bring about change", "making a difference" and "having agency".

De Vignemont and Fournieret argue that there are particular cognitive processes which provide a fundamental sense of agency, including both a sense of one's own movements and a sense of initiation (2004, p.1). This is similar to Kelly's assertion in PCP that there is always the possibility for seeing and understanding things in a different way and thus for changing one's behaviour and actions, so that people are able to, "... play active roles in the shaping of events" (1991, p.14).

The women had clear ideas about how they wanted to be leaders even if they did not use the language of 'models' to describe this; including being inclusive, competent, caring, collaborative, finding creative solutions, making connections, being collegial, asking questions and enabling consensus.

Leadership was viewed as an ongoing "process seeking growth" requiring self-awareness, a commitment to personal development, as well as the ability to learn from and build on experience.

Parsons argues that agency and actions do not reveal identity per se but action-taken influences and changes identity (2002b, p.112). Likewise, if how we construe effects how we behave (Fransella, 1972, p.69) and how we behave impacts on our identity, then this may lead to a difference in how we construe. Thus, it could be argued that agency or taking action will necessarily result in an ongoing process of learning and transformation. The desire therefore that these women have to make a difference is thus profound and powerful. Agency therefore becomes a "fulcrum for change" and implies a "horizon of a future held open" (Parsons, 2002b, p.97/150).

There remain a number of questions about the exact meaning of "agency" (Hitlin and Elder, 2007, p.170), and the potential for its misuse (Parsons, 2002a, p.97). The ability to take action and make a difference is clearly a complex interweaving, not only of an understanding of self but also of initiating activity within a particular context and of evaluating it in relation to the norms of that context.

Although the ability to "make a difference", "get on with the job" and "take action" was paramount for all the senior women, this needed to be coupled with "having integrity in relationships". Thus, "agency" is exercised within the context of fostering and developing relationships of reliability and honesty. In other words, *agency enhanced with communion*.

Having integrity in relationships is crucial to the women in this study as they exercise their leadership. As McFadyen notes, "Personal integrity must be understood in terms of public appearance in communication through which the form of one's commitment to oneself and others materialises, is experienced and may henceforth be expected by others" (1990, p.154). Consequently, it is probably fair to suggest that the women in this study, who are particularly insightful, have a "double sense of agency" (de Vignemont and Fournieret, 2004, p.17), not only about the actions themselves but also the processes behind those abilities which bring about change, including the social context in which they occur. Grey asserts that "maximising connectedness" and finding "a voice" in relation to the church is a crucial way in which this commitment to

integrity in relationships can be demonstrated (1996, p.149ff). Others describe this connectedness as being in the form of a “web” (for example, Western, 2008, p.196). This links with the work of Willhauck and Thorpe, who see the metaphor of a web as not just a way of describing women’s leadership but as a way of equipping them as leaders not just to “fit in” but to “fit together” to build community (1991, p.15). Eagly and Carli’s observation that, “Women who blend agency with communion address both sides of the double bind - assertive enough to be effective leaders but also personable enough to display care” (2007, p.188) is pertinent here too.

Generally, the senior women seek to work collegially and enable consensus. They also are prepared to challenge where necessary and make their voices heard. This was somewhat in contrast to the women in the MFS who seem more ambivalent about "collaboration" and feel that it is a more "risky" venture. The group of senior women who were perhaps closest to this viewpoint were the Archdeacons who although are clearly in senior leadership roles do not usually have ultimate responsibility. Bonem and Patterson coin the phrase, "leading from the second chair" (2005, p.2). It refers to the challenges faced by those who, although are in leadership positions and have significant influence within an organisation, are not in charge overall. Essentially, they argue that leading from the second chair is about finding your way through a set of three paradoxes - leader/subordinate, deep/wide, present/future - and living with both ends of those paradoxes.

The Archdeacons, in contrast to the Cathedral Deans and Theological Educators who can perhaps mould and shape the structures, try to work within them. Sometimes though they have to move beyond the formal authority they are given. When we add to this the particular issues women leaders face in having to demonstrate that their ministry is also benefiting the church, and we begin to see just how challenging such leadership may be.

It is clear in this study, that not only are the women keen to exercise agency but that they are also capable of initiating and evaluating their actions within the particularities of the church context. They are thus exercising “living agency” (Barandiaran et al., 2009, p.6), and are employing a multitude of abilities, including being “future

orientated" (Tarr-Whelan, 2009, p.10), which they are using appropriately and skilfully in the variety of situations they encounter. The emphasis is having the ability to bring about change and make things happen, but fundamental to this is being a relational leader who seeks to develop interactions based on integrity and trust.

The *Context* in which leadership is exercised:

Engaging with the Structures - Being a 'woman' leader

The discussion about context falls once again broadly into two categories - structures and gender.

Leadership exercised in the church requires a deep understanding and engagement with the structures.

Generally, the Archdeacons emphasised working within the structures but they also accepted that there were occasions when they needed to be prepared to confront the structures too. In contrast, the Cathedral Deans and Theological Educators focused on how to mould and shape the structures.

It can be difficult for women who have to both win the trust of senior colleagues and be prepared to be a "critical friend" to the institution.

A number of the women reported that they "sat lightly" to the structures. This is maybe because historically women have not been allowed to claim authority of office, so have had to take their authority from "personal charisma" (Ruether and McLaughlin, 1979, p.20).

A number of the women observed that it was very difficult to find appropriate 'models' of leadership or other resources from the Christian tradition to draw on in their understanding or exercise of leadership. Sarah questioned whether it was possible for tradition to be used in a positive way that empowers women in their gifts and calling. Particularly problematic was the model of 'servant leadership', which is perhaps the prevalent model in the church today. The church is without doubt, primarily a masculine context at senior levels. Consequently, there needs to be an awareness of the impact that this has on women and what might be the effect of having more women at the most senior levels of the church, including bishops.

The two Theological Educators spoke of the continual and challenging process of understanding 'who' they were as leaders. This process was particularly demanding for them as they play key roles in the formation and skills of those training for ministry who are learning to develop their own 'ministerial identities'. Both felt that these issues were more complicated for women, especially those in leadership, primarily due to the current context in the Church of England.

Most of the women in this study, have been appointed, or asked to apply for their posts, directly by bishops in their dioceses. In many ways, this is positive, because these men are clearly doing what they can to support and affirm women's ministry. However, this clearly has implications for the ongoing collegial relationship. As Mary observed, although they are grateful to men for encouraging them to apply or appointing women to senior posts, "it is also paternalistic and patronising". It also does not help those women in other dioceses where there is no such encouragement. Women face a number of 'double binds' in leadership (Tarr-Whelan, 2009, p.35) which not only influence their ability to fulfil their roles but can also be challenging as they apply for jobs. For example, Hedges found that 78% of women in her sample of clergy were willing to take up a senior post if the opportunity arose, however 80% said they would be more willing to do so if encouraged by a senior colleague but less than 6% said they would apply to an open advert (2010, p.70-71). Without any intervention women often end up in specialised ministries (Stevens, 1996, p.282) and are rarely appointed to lead large churches (Rosslyn-Smith, 2010, p.84), neither of which provide the necessary background for senior leadership in the church. These issues will become increasingly significant as the church moves towards an open interview process for those in senior roles. In addition, leadership is still seen culturally as masculine, women working in a male culture have less access to traditionally male networks, and, negotiating work and family roles can be particularly challenging for women, (Eagly and Carli, 2007, p.186ff). In light of this, it is interesting to note that only 43% of the women in this study were married and only 29% had children.

*The women are aware that they are still seen explicitly as "women" leaders
and get mixed messages about their leadership.*

Just as in the MFS, the women observed that although working in a "gendered context" could be challenging, they primarily just want to "get on with the job". Likewise, they are aware they are still viewed explicitly as "women" leaders. Evidence of this are the "mixed messages" they receive about their leadership. For example, the appointment of men, opposed to women's ordination, to senior positions within a diocese "to even things up". They question too whether they are "heard" in meetings and note that they sometimes feel uncomfortable regarding the way other women are talked about in meetings.

The women also believe that other senior male colleagues regard them as being "more risky" to appoint. The diocesan bishop's response to Mary, following her appointment to a senior role, illustrates this well, "This is a big job, people will be watching you, don't mess up ... don't let us (the church, men, me, bishop) down".

Although women are now in some senior roles, a few of them observed that they are sometimes given tasks that feed into gendered stereotypes, for example, focusing on pastoral work. Whilst it may be the case that particular women may be suited to these specific tasks, they argued that it was difficult to work in a complementary way without colluding with gendered stereotypes.

*The women report that men are often polarised in their relationships with them
and this leads to unhelpful assumptions being made.
This can result in a "fear of failure" or lack of "confidence".*

Generally, women the women recognised that they are "more observed, viewed symbolically and used as change agents". However, they also acknowledged that gender can bring opportunities as well as challenges, for example, the freedom to inhabit the role in your own way and if you do something well as a woman, it may get you noticed!

In summary:

The *Person* of the leader - includes the personal and the public face of leadership. It involves being 'yourself' as a leader, managing oneself within the role and managing the public role.

The *Process* of Leadership - can be summarised as 'agency enhanced by communion'. The emphasis here is having the ability to bring about change and make things happen, but fundamental to this is being a relational leader who seeks to develop interactions based on integrity and trust.

The *Context* in which leadership is exercised - involves a deep understanding and engagement with the structures of the church, within which the leadership role is experienced and exercised by gendered persons.

Conclusions

General observations

This thesis has investigated the issue of why more women do not apply for senior positions in the church from both ends. Firstly, in the Ministry Focused Study, from the perspective of women incumbents, the pool of women from whom those in senior roles will be selected. They are also the largest group of visible women in a diocese who are exercising leadership roles. Secondly, in the Research Based Thesis, we approached the question from the standpoint of those who are already in senior positions in the church. We explored how women in senior positions in the Church of England made sense of their leadership roles and what enabled them in these roles. The women in both studies longed for the day when their "gender would no longer be an issue". Having women 'visible' in the hierarchy of the church is significant to other women. How these senior women fare, together with the debate about 'women bishops' makes women reflect on their own ministries and affects both how they feel about their ministries and on the value placed by the church on their ministries. The majority of the women in the RBT reported that the role was what they expected and that they enjoyed their roles, even though they often found them challenging. They mentioned a number of things that particularly helped them in their roles:

- Belonging to a worshipping community and making spirituality a priority.
- The authority that comes with a role, enabling one to be "visible and heard".
- A balanced life with friends and family who would challenge as well as support.
- Women friends, peers and role models.
- Access to experienced advisors, "friendly critics" and other networks.
- Constructive relationships with supportive, trustworthy and available colleagues, particularly senior colleagues.
- The ability to build on experience coupled with appropriate training.
- Opportunities to be involved in a variety of aspects of church life.
- Clarity of role and structures.

Gender clearly permeated many of the comments about the church, the exercise of leadership, and how the role was inhabited. Women undoubtedly still face many

varied and complicated challenges in their paths to become senior leaders, especially in areas that are male dominated (Eagly and Carli, 2007, p.199). Their paths to leadership are also different, perhaps more accurately be described by the metaphor of a labyrinth rather than a glass ceiling (op. cit., p.187).

However, the latest report from the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2012) gives some room for optimism. It highlights that, "... the leadership skills that organisations lack are performance management skills, leading and people management skills and skills to manage change" (p.6). In addition, leaders need to be able to think in a "future focused way" (p.31), and the innovation and creativity that are critical to many organisations, and needed for true transformation, thrive in a collaborative and open culture (p.33). The senior women in our study are thus well placed to contribute to the sort of leadership advocated in the CIPD report. On the other hand, when there are more women in senior positions, we have to recognise that there will be losses too. As Shaw notes, it is often easier to challenge structures when one is "outside" (2010, p.90). There is also the question of whether one should work towards having full equality and inclusion for women within the church, or whether the focus should be on the, "... dismantling of a clerical, hierarchical model ... and the creation of egalitarian Christian communities" (Ruether, 2011, p.64).

This leads Maier to the paradox:

"The more we succeed in transforming the gendered substructure of organisations ... the less important and desirable that objective may appear.

After all, a preoccupation with occupational success is itself a hallmark of the masculinist substructure we have sought to expose and challenge" (1999, p.92).

The idea of "leading from the edge" or "from the margins" as a place of power, is picked up by a number of theologians, including Ruether and McLaughlin (1979, p.28) and Russell (1993, p.27). In their discussion of the church as a "web", Willhauck and Thorpe emphasise that the people on the margins are as vital as those who occupy the centre. Indeed one of the key tasks of leadership is to develop 'tools' that promote inclusiveness and dialogue, because, "In the church, the ministry of those 'on the edge', the leading edge, is truly effective ..." (2001, p.30-31).

Three important questions

Can 'Servant Leadership' be a good model for women?

One of the ways in which gender difference has been used to women's disadvantage is to attribute to women "a set of expectations" (Purvis, 1995, p.100) which associates them with being "weaker" or "passive" (Graham, 1995, p.23). Linked with Faull's suggestion that in the church men need to learn to share power, and women need to learn to offer their gifts in leadership (2006, p.9), it appears that the leadership model that seems problematic for both women and men is one of the most common (and frequently unquestioned) models of church leadership, that of the 'servant-leader'. Although there are also issues here for men, the problems it raises for women leaders, who also have to cope with particular sets of expectations and assumptions attached to their roles, are especially acute; consequently we have to question whether this model can in any way be helpful for women.

The idea of 'servant' is deeply embedded in the Judeo-Christian tradition (Greenleaf, 1998, p.22). The research study by Heelas and Woodhead, across a broad range of church traditions, affirms the continuing reality of that (2005, p.15). Generally, the term 'servant' is understood to be someone who defers to a more powerful other. It is not difficult to see, particularly where the hierarchy is, or has been, mostly male, why this is problematic for women. Such an understanding of service seems to conflict with what it might mean to fulfil one's potential and grow into the gifts, responsibilities and expectations of leadership.

Indeed, a number of writers specifically highlight some of the challenges that are raised for women. For example, Slee observes that the emphasis on a "call to service", traditionally understood as a "denial of self" is a "...dangerous model for those who are already in a position of powerlessness" (2003, p.88). Alternatively, as Ward notes, "While for men to act as servants is to make a significant counter cultural gesture ('he's a great leader - he even does *those* things!'), women are used to serving others, including men and putting others before themselves ... For most women, service has not been chosen; it has been assumed and expected" (2008, p. 144).

Interestingly, Greenleaf's original phrase was actually, "the servant as leader" but this is often abbreviated to 'servant leadership', with the result that some of the subtlety of the original phrase is lost. His original phrase starts with the value of (existing) service and then applies it to the practice of leadership. However, in the abbreviated phrase, the leader becomes the focus. In his foreword the editor Larry Spears says, "I think Greenleaf is saying that leadership is a special case of service; he is not saying that service is a special case of leadership" (1998, p.xii). Greenleaf himself is also very aware that the term "servant as leader" could easily become a gimmick, a programme that focuses on doing rather than being (p. 145).

Greenleaf suggests "servant as leader" involves being a prophet, a seeker, someone who is persistent, determined and has the courage to risk (p.120/121). He also stresses the leader's role as the enabler of voluntary and durable consensus (p.59, 138) and who has the skill of persuasion (p.159ff). Given appropriate support and awareness, it is not hard to see how this might apply to women in leadership. The key thing here is that service, as an expression of leadership, is freely chosen. It requires a healthy sense of 'self', including an acceptance of gifts and skills, as well as authority and power. Involving too the courage to be prophetic. Provocatively, if we take Greenleaf at his most literal, if women are already naturally exercising 'service' in the church; they obviously will make the best natural leaders too!

Can tradition be a resource for women?

As women seek to be included at all levels of the church, some point to tradition as a way of stressing the enormity of the task ahead. For example, Shaw states that, "Throughout Christian history women, their gifts and their capacity for leadership have been sacrificed in the face of fear and in the resulting desire to retain the status quo" (2010, p.88). Other people, however, look to tradition more as a resource for the empowerment of women in leadership.⁵⁰ Two people, who have done this extensively, but with rather different emphases, are Rosemary Radford-Ruether and Elisabeth Schussler-Fiorenza. Fiorenza, for example, asserts that there is evidence of an egalitarian, inclusive and anti-patriarchal community in early Christian discussions

⁵⁰ For example, Mayeski (2004) explores the role of women 'at the table' and as theologians in mediaeval times and thus challenges the handed down wisdom that women in the church are only recently appearing in senior positions. Eisen (2000) also looks at women office holders in the early church.

about the church. However, although it appears that women played significant roles as apostles, prophets and teachers within this community of equals, this egalitarianism disappeared as Christianity moved into the Greco-Roman world (cited by Slee, 2003, p.91). Consequently, Fiorenza argues for a reclaiming of the tradition, as an “alternative hermeneutical concept”, in challenging the “dominant discourses” of the patriarchal institution of the church (cited by Watson, 1996, p.59). In contrast, Ruether notes that models of early Christian ministry were often charismatic, prophetic, exercised in community and tended to include women (1988, p.11/26). She argues therefore that tradition should be used mainly to locate the church in its historical relativity, and the church needs to transmit tradition responsibly and be open to new movements of the Spirit that can bring tradition alive (op. cit., p.33ff). Thus whereas Ruether sees the church as being on a journey to a more inclusive future, Fiorenza views it as something that “... will become historical reality only when women are fully incorporated into it” (Fiorenza, in Watson, 1996, p.55).

The extent to which tradition can be a resource continues to be the cause of much debate. In any case, as Catherine Jefferts Schori observes, it is perhaps the changing understanding of *who* may exercise authority in the church rather than what women *do* that causes the most resistance (cited by Shaw, 2010, p.89). As was clear in our results, women have to find a difficult path between, on the one hand, "getting on with the job", showing their ministry is valuable and, at the same time demonstrating that they are not the harbingers of radical change.

This ongoing debate around the usefulness of tradition and the church's ambiguity about women in leadership roles has led to the development of a number of different models of church, which fully include women. For example, Willhauck and Thorpe suggest the image of a web for the church (2001, p.30-31). A second model is the concept of "church in the round" which is perhaps best outlined by Letty Russell (1993; and Kanyoro, 1997). This model stresses hospitality, inclusion (p.25) and action reflection (p.33). Ruether proposes "Women-Church", a loose network that seeks the transformation, through a dialectical process, that will enable women to be fully incorporated into a co-human church (1988, p.62/73); "a global, ecumenical

movement made up of local feminist base communities of justice-seeking friends who engage in sacrament and solidarity " (2011, p.68).

However, the three models of operation are somewhat ambivalent about leadership, particularly when this is formalised.

Natalie Watson is one of the few women theologians to write explicitly and currently about ecclesiology. One her key propositions is that rather than talk about women 'in' the church or women 'and' the church, women 'are' the church and have always been the church (1996, p. 1; also Slee, 2003, p.93).

A useful feminist ecclesiology therefore needs to recognise the ambiguity of male-defined boundaries for women, transcend them and attempt to find ways of working helpfully within them (op. cit., p. 11).

Is simply having more women enough?

We do not yet know whether simply including more women in the hierarchy of the church will lead to significant change; it may be, as Willhauck suspects, that there needs to be a more fundamental shift in structures for that to happen (2005, p.25).

However, at the very least increasing numbers of women as a senior leadership level will lead to questioning about what leadership is and how we lead, and what the church is and how it should be (Shaw, 2010, p.89).

For example, Hartley observes that at present the model of power most obviously at work in the world (and in the church) is the one that promotes self, or other majority groups. However, having more women involved at a higher level might mean that power is understood and exercised differently, like choosing to "stoop down" so that people might come together (2010, p. 21). Including more women in the hierarchy of the church can mean that there is a fresh perspective and women may be willing also to question and challenge existing structures. Nevertheless, as Shaw also notes, this can be difficult for women on two fronts. Those who do not like the change will often react with fear and sometimes hostility; those who are supportive of the change will often have unrealistically high expectations of what women will do. So, she concludes, "Women in leadership can, then, be caught between these attacks and expectations, with little room to be themselves" (2010, p.87).

To assume that the church will change, without a corresponding change in structures, simply because there were more women in the hierarchy, places “undue expectations” on women (Shaw, 2010, p.89) and makes it difficult for women, “... to lead in different, perhaps more effective ways” (Maier, 1992, p.92; also Willhauck, 2005, p.25). Watson concurs, “...their presence and participation has to be expressed in the very structures in which the church as the embodiment of the Triune God manifests itself here and now” (p.7).

In the MFS, we noted that the women were generally reasonably optimistic about working within the structures, as long as they felt the church was “on a journey” and engaged in a process that was moving forward. However, they realised that ultimately it was only by changing the institutional structures in the church that would enable new, more inclusive patterns of ministry to emerge. Closing the gender gap in leadership is helpful for everyone as it draws on a wider pool of talent, brings in diverse ideas and perspectives, utilises the skills and leadership capacity of women as well as men and enhances social engagement (Tarr-Whelan, 2009, p.177ff, p.458). Having women in senior positions is inspirational and demonstrates that the church really believes that, “... sexuality is a God-given endowment to be used for human happiness and fulfilment and for divine glory ...” (Avis, 1992, p.14).

Although clericalism may be regarded by some as one of the destructive factors for women in the church (Ruether, 2011, p.63), Watson argues that admitting women to priestly or episcopal ministry “provides a context” which challenges the church about being the full church of God (1996, p.77). Clearly, as more women exercise leadership in the church, particularly at a senior level, the church will change but this may not happen automatically and the consequences may be unpredictable. As Christina Rees observes, “We now need to prepare for the next phase, the gradual becoming of a Church that includes both women and men at all levels of its ordained ministry. It will not be enough to slot the women into the system and assume that the result will be a renewed and transformed Church” (2002, p.28). Interestingly, the tipping point for women’s presence in organisations resulting in real change is only around 30% (Tarr-Whelan, 2009, p.15). However, will the church enable the demonstrable courage, commitment, competence and confidence of women to make a real difference?

To boldly go ... is of course a well-known phrase from Star Trek: “Space: the

final frontier ... continuing mission: to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no one has gone before”.

Of course men have gone before and so too have women to a lesser extent. However, we are still a long way from those final frontiers where, to paraphrase John Saxbee (in Rees, 2002, p.194), we will only have true equality in the church when, 'women can be mad, bad or sad, just as men are sometimes mad, bad or sad'. For now, women are still seen explicitly as 'women' leaders or ministers, more observed, more unusual, more of a risk. They also know that they are viewed symbolically, used as change agents, and that this produces both opportunities and challenges. As an example, those who are positive about women's ministry sometimes have unrealistically high expectations of what women will do and the difference they may make.

In the Preface, we defined a leader as:

A person who embodies the values and symbols (of the church) in a way that enables them to facilitate an ongoing process of transformation for themselves, others and the institution itself which is life-giving and ultimately points to God.

Our definition still holds, but perhaps we need to add that for the women in this study, “... in a way ...” means, “by developing relationships of integrity”.

The senior women in our study clearly seek to become transformational leaders who inhabit their roles with integrity; can affect significant change; develop insight and oversight; use wisdom and courage to engage with the structures.

Despite the challenges, these women will increasingly have an impact on the context and process of leadership, as they seek not just to be in the structures but also to shape and transform those structures, and explore the people they want to be in their leadership roles. Women have learned to be pioneers but now they need to learn to move beyond that, to be leaders who can be themselves, who can combine agency with communion and who will work within, as well as challenge and help to shape the structures.

Obviously these are not the final words on the matter for, as Kelly reminds us, Personal Construct Psychology provides some ad interim psychological insights; it is a psychology for “adventuresome souls” (1991, p.xii). Perhaps what we need now is a theology for adventurers, so that individually and together we can develop wisdom, re-engage with scripture, reclaim tradition and participate in dialogue that is so necessary because “WE, the church, remain open because we see ourselves as incomplete” (Percy, 2010, p.124).

So it seems that women can boldly go ... but will we enable them to become fully the people and leaders God wants them to be, so that we, they and the church, can have life in all its abundance, in all its diversity and inclusiveness? Many people believe that the church would be better if women had stronger voices but believing is not enough, we must actively contribute to bringing it about, being prepared to leap, so that places of fragility and ambivalence can become places of redemption, transformation, freedom and hope.

*Dare to
declare
who you
are. It
isn't
far from
the shores
of silence
to the
boundaries
of speech.
The road
is not
long but
the way
is deep.
And you
must not
only
walk there,
you must
be prepared
to leap.*

(Conversations with Muse by Nicola Slee, 2004, p.60)

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Appendix A

THE 11 COROLLARIES IN PCP

Kelly's 11 Corollaries in PCP

Starting from the basic "postulate" of *constructive alternativism*, Kelly "fleshes out" his theory with the use of 11 fundamental tenets (corollaries) which are drawn from this basic philosophical position, and around which theory and practice have been built. We will now look at each of these corollaries briefly by drawing on Kelly's discussion in the 1991 reprinted version, *The Psychology of Personal Constructs: Volume one: Theory and Personality*.

The *Construction, Modulation and Dichotomy* corollaries are to do with the framework in which we do our construing. This framework helps us both to understand more clearly what is going on and provides the structure within which we can observe recurrent themes, beginnings and endings, similarities and differences, and thus enables us to make predictions about future events (pp.35, 55, 41). Within this framework people will anticipate and construe events differently (*Individuality Corollary*) and people will also differ in the way that they 'organise' the constructions of events which might otherwise conflict (*Organisation Corollary*, p.38-39). For example, people may organise their constructs based on an ethical system, or out of a desire for self-preservation, or a faith system, or on some other value that they hold to be important. When a conflict occurs people have the choice about whether they will conserve the system or replace part or all of it, which is why these occasions can potentially be opportunities, albeit uncomfortable, for growth. The *Choice Corollary* emanates from this idea. Kelly suggests that people will choose the alternative that will give them the best basis for anticipating future events, depending on whether they opt for adventure or security (p.45).

A person's construct framework thus continually goes through a validation process where constructs act as "working hypotheses", which are then tested against experience (p.53); this is the *Experience Corollary*. The corollary implies that ongoing learning is part of what it means to be human. These working hypotheses have meaning within a range (*Range Corollary*) and the meaning is lost once the construct goes beyond these boundaries. The example that Kelly gives is the construct "good/bad" - some people will use it to apply to a wide range of situations, whereas others will only use it about the weather (p.48). That is partly why an understanding of the context is so vital. In addition, inconsistencies in "subsystems" which are incompatible with each are also highlighted (*Fragmentation Corollary*, p.58).

The final two corollaries take the theory from the individual into the collective. The *Commonality Corollary* is about the extent to which a person uses constructions of experience, which are similar to that used by another (p.63). For example, in this study because people have the same value system (Christianity), and are reflecting on the same context (the Church of England), we would expect to find a degree of overlap in how these women construe their leadership roles, and that overlap may give us some useful information. The *Sociality Corollary* is about the extent to which one person is able to construe the construction process of another, and thus be involved in the social processes of the other person (p.66). Once again, because the women in the current study have similar aims (although maybe articulated in different ways: serving God, building the Kingdom, helping people to grow in faith etc.) this corollary should enable us to discover something about how these people, as a group of women in senior posts, construe their leadership roles.

Appendix B

MFS GRID QUESTIONNAIRES

Me now as an ordained woman

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Unable to be the person I really am as an ordained woman								Able to be the person I really am as an ordained woman
Inward looking								Outward looking
Feel affirmed as an ordained woman								Do not feel affirmed as an ordained woman
Not much ability to influence change as an ordained woman								Ability to influence change as an ordained woman
Prefer to work collaboratively								Not work collaboratively
Prefer to work with inherited patterns of ministry								Prefer to develop new patterns of ministry
Prepared to take risks as an ordained woman								Not prepared to take risks as an ordained woman
Seen as a 'woman priest'								Seen as a priest
Feel comfortable being a 'public figure' within the community as an ordained woman								Do not feel comfortable being a 'public figure' within the community as an ordained woman
Moving forward								Stagnating
Comfortable working with things as they are								Uncomfortable working with things as they are
Able to give of my best to God as an ordained woman								Not able to give of my best to God as an ordained woman
Able to have some impact in changing people's lives for the better as an ordained woman								Able to have little impact in changing people's lives for the better as an ordained woman

My Diocese now

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Does not enable me to be the person I really am, in my role								Enables me to be the person I really am, in my role
Is inward looking								Is outward looking
Helps me to feel affirmed in my role								Does not help me feel affirmed in my role
Does not have much ability to influence change								Has the ability to influence change
Promotes collaborative ways of working								Does not promote collaborative ways of working
Works with inherited patterns of ministry								Develops new patterns of ministry
Is prepared to take risks								Is not prepared to take risks
Sees me as a 'woman priest'								Sees me as a priest
Helps me to feel comfortable being a 'public figure' within the community								Does not help me to feel comfortable being a 'public figure' within the community
Is moving forward								Is stagnating
Seems comfortable working with things as they are								Seems uncomfortable working with things as they are
Enables me to give of my best to God in my role								Does not enable me to give of my best to God in my role
Has some impact in changing people's lives for the better								Has little impact in changing people's lives for the better

The Church of England as I would like it to be

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Wouldn't enable me to be the person I really am in my role								Would enable me to be the person I really am in my role
Would be inward looking								Would be outward looking
Would help me to feel affirmed in my role								Would not help me feel affirmed in my role
Would not have much ability to influence change								Would have ability to influence change
Would promote collaborative ways of working								Would not promote collaborative ways of working
Would work with inherited patterns of ministry								Would develop new patterns of ministry
Be prepared to take risks								Not be prepared to take risks
See me as a 'woman priest'								See me as a priest
Would encourage me to feel comfortable being a 'public figure' in the community								Wouldn't encourage me to feel comfortable being a 'public figure' in the community
Moving forward as a church								Stagnating as a church
Would be comfortable working with things as they are								Would be uncomfortable working with things as they are
Would enable me to give of my best to God in my role								Would not enable me to give of my best to God in my role
Some impact in changing people's lives for the better								Little impact in changing people's lives for the better

Me now in my job

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Unable to be the person I really am, in my role								Able to be the person I really am, in my role
Inward looking								Outward looking
Feel affirmed in my role								Do not feel affirmed in my role
Not much ability to influence change in my current role								Ability to influence change in my current role
Prefer to work collaboratively in my role								Prefer not to work collaboratively in my role
Working with inherited patterns of ministry								Developing new patterns of ministry
Prepared to take risks								Not prepared to take risks
Seen as a 'woman priest'								Seen as a priest
Feel comfortable being a 'public figure' within the community								Feel uncomfortable being a 'public figure' within the community
Moving forward in my role								Stagnating in my role
Comfortable working with things as they are in my current role								Uncomfortable working with things as they are in my current role
Able to give of my best to God in my role								Not able to give of my best to God in my role
Able to have some impact in changing people's lives for the better in my role								Able to have little impact in changing people's lives for the better in my role

Me as an ordained woman as I'd like to be

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Would not be able to be the person I really am as an ordained woman								Would be able to be the person I really am as an ordained woman
Would be inward looking								Would be outward looking
Would feel affirmed as an ordained woman								Would not feel affirmed as an ordained woman
Would not to have much ability to influence change								Would have ability to influence change
Prefer to work collaboratively								Prefer not to work collaboratively
Working with inherited patterns of ministry								Developing new patterns of ministry
Would be prepared to take risks as an ordained woman								Not prepared to take risks as an ordained woman
Seen as a 'woman priest'								Seen as a priest
Would feel comfortable being a 'public figure' within the community								Would not feel comfortable being a 'public figure' within the community
Moving forward as an ordained woman								Stagnating as an ordained woman
Comfortable working with things as they are								Uncomfortable working with things as they are
Be able to give of my best to God as an ordained woman								Not be able to give of my best to God as an ordained woman
Some impact in changing people's lives for the better								Little impact in changing people's lives for the better

How I think the Diocese sees me

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
As someone who is unable to be the person they really are in their role								As someone who is able to be the person they really are in their role
Inward looking in their role								Outward looking in their role
Affirmed in their role								Not affirmed in their role
As someone who does not have much ability to influence change in their role								As someone who has ability to influence change in their role
As someone who prefers to work collaboratively								As someone who prefers not to work collaboratively
As someone who works with inherited patterns of ministry								As someone who develops new patterns of ministry
Someone who is prepared to take risks in their role								Someone who isn't prepared to take risks in their role
As a 'woman priest'								As a priest
Comfortable being a 'public figure' within the community in their role								Uncomfortable being a 'public figure' within the community in their role
As someone who is moving forward in their role								As someone who is stagnating in their role
Comfortable working with things as they are								Uncomfortable working with things as they are
Able to give of their best to God in their role								Unable me to give of their best to God in their role
Some impact in changing people's lives for the better								Little impact in changing people's lives for the better

Me as a person

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Unable to be the person I really am								Able to be the person I really am
Inward looking as a person								Outward looking as a person
Feel affirmed as a person								Do not feel affirmed as a person
Not much ability to influence change as a person								Ability to influence change as a person
Prefer to do things collaboratively								Prefer not to do things collaboratively
Prefer to stick with inherited patterns of working								Prefer to develop new patterns of working
Prepared to take risks								Not prepared to take risks
Seen as a 'woman priest'								Seen as a priest
Feel comfortable being a 'public figure' within the community								Feel uncomfortable being a 'public figure' within the community
Moving forward as a person								Stagnating as a person
Comfortable working with things as they are								Uncomfortable working with things as they are
Able to give of my best to God								Not able to give of my best to God
Able to have some impact in changing people's lives for the better								Able to have little impact in changing people's lives for the better

My job as I would like it to be

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Would not be able to be the person I really am in my role								Would be able to be the person I really am in my role
Inward looking in my role								Outward looking in my role
Would feel affirmed in my role								Wouldn't feel affirmed in my role
Would not have much ability to influence change in my role								Would have the ability to influence change in my role
Would work collaboratively in my role								Would not work collaboratively in my role
Would be working with inherited patterns of ministry in my role								Would be developing new patterns of ministry in my role
Would be prepared to take risks in my role								Would not be prepared to take risks in my role
Seen as a 'woman priest'								Seen as a priest
Would feel comfortable being a 'public figure' within the community								Would feel uncomfortable being a 'public figure' within the community
Moving forward in my role								Stagnating in my role
Comfortable working with things as they are in my role								Uncomfortable working with things as they are in my role
Would be able to give of my best to God in my role								Would not to be able to give of my best to God in my role
Would be able to have some impact in changing people's lives for the better in my role								Would be able to have little impact in changing people's lives for the better in my role

The Church of England now

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Does not enable me to be the person I really am in my role								Enables me to be the person I really am in my role
Is inward looking								Is outward looking
Helps me to feel affirmed in my role								Does not help me to feel affirmed in my role
Does not have much ability to influence change								Has ability to influence change
Promotes collaborative ways of working								Does not promote collaborative ways of working
Is working with inherited patterns of ministry								Is developing new patterns of ministry
Is prepared to take risks								Is not prepared to take risks
Sees me as a 'woman priest'								Sees me as a priest
Enables me to be comfortable being a 'public figure' within the community in my role								Does not enable me to be comfortable being a 'public figure' within the community in my role
Is moving forward								Is stagnating
Is comfortable working with things as they are								Is uncomfortable working with things as they are
Enables me to give of my best to God in my role								Does not enable me to give of my best to God in my role
Is able to have some impact in changing people's lives for the better								Is able to have little impact in changing people's lives for the better

The Diocese as I would like it to be

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Wouldn't enable me to be the person I really am, in my role								Would enable me to be the person I really am, in my role
Would be inward looking								Would be outward looking
Would help me to feel affirmed in my role								Would not help me feel affirmed in my role
Would not have much ability to influence change								Would have ability to influence change
Would promote collaborative ways of working								Would not promote collaborative ways of working
Would be working with inherited patterns of ministry								Would be developing new patterns of ministry
Would be prepared to take risks								Would not be prepared to take risks
Would see me as a 'woman priest'								Would see me as a priest
Comfortable being a 'public figure' within the community in my role								Uncomfortable being a 'public figure' within the community in my role
Would be moving forward								Would be stagnating
Would be comfortable working with things as they are								Would be uncomfortable working with things as they are
Would enable me to give of my best to God in my role								Would not enable me to give of my best to God in my role
Some impact in changing people's lives for the better								Little impact in changing people's lives for the better

**PLEASE RANK THE FOLLOWING ISSUES IN ORDER OF
IMPORTANCE TO YOU**

Being able to be the person I really am in my role	
Being inward looking v Being outward looking	
Being affirmed in your role	
Having the ability to influence change	
Collaborative working	
Patterns of ministry (Inherited v Developing new)	
Being prepared to take risks	
Being seen as a 'woman' priest or just being seen as a priest	
Being a public figure in the community	
Moving forward v Stagnating	
Working with things as they are (Comfortable v Uncomfortable)	
Giving of myself to God	
Having impact in changing people's lives for the better	

**PLEASE RANK THE FOLLOWING ISSUES IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE
THAT YOU THINK THEY ARE FOR THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND**

Enabling priests to be the 'person' they really are in their role	
Being inward looking v Being outward looking	
Affirming people in their role	
Ability to influence change	
Collaborative working	
Patterns of ministry (Inherited v Developing new)	
Being prepared to take risks	
Seeing priests as 'woman' priests or just as priests	
Enabling priests to be public figures in the community	
Moving forward v Stagnating	
Working with things as they are (Comfortable v Uncomfortable)	
Enabling priests to give of themselves to God	
Having impact in changing people's lives for the better	

**PLEASE RANK THE FOLLOWING ISSUES IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE
THAT YOU THINK THEY ARE FOR THE DIOCESE**

Enabling priests to be the 'person' they really are in their role	
Being inward looking v Being outward looking	
Affirming people in their role	
Ability to influence change	
Collaborative working	
Patterns of ministry (Inherited v Developing new)	
Being prepared to take risks	
Seeing priests as 'woman' priests or just as priests	
Enabling priests to be public figures in the community	
Moving forward v Stagnating	
Working with things as they are (Comfortable v Uncomfortable)	
Enabling priests to give of themselves to God	
Having impact in changing people's lives for the better	

Appendix C

INITIAL LETTER TO WOMEN (RBT)

INTERVIEW INFORMATION GATHERING

Biographical information (blank)

Helps and Hindrances sheet (blank)

Elements and Triadic Elicitation

Grid with Elements (blank)

Initial letter to the women

3rd December 2007

I am writing to you to ask for your help in two ways and to ask for your forbearance as I am aware that being asked for help in research projects is a bit of an occupational hazard if you are a woman in a senior position in the Church of England.

After 10 years as a parish priest, I am now working in the Ministry and Training Dept. of the Diocese of Rochester and I have responsibility for IME 4-7 and also for Lay Training.

I am also doing a Doctorate in Ministry at King's College, London and am now in the final couple of years of that, which requires a major piece of empirical research.

This follows a one-year research project, which I completed in September, exploring how the women incumbents in the Diocese of Rochester understood and felt about their ministry.

In my current research, I am hoping to find out something about how senior (not in terms of age!) women in the C of E feel about, and make sense of, their roles as leaders (and 'managers' of people) and what helps or hinders women in that role.

My interest emerges partly out of a lecture I heard by Vivienne Faull in May last year ('The contribution of women to the priestly ministry of the church'). Also, because I am involved in training clergy (over half of whom are women and yet with relatively few of them going on to be incumbents post curacy) and partly because I am frequently asked by senior men in the church why more women don't apply for senior positions.

As I am also still a Chartered (and previously practising) Psychologist, the research methods I have chosen to use are derived from Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) and it was a PCP method that I employed in the 1-year research project I undertook in Rochester. The research method I am using is a way of interviewing/ designing questionnaires where the themes emerge from the people being interviewed.

As I know that you have many pressures on your time, I wondered if at this stage, you would be willing to spend 10/15 minutes writing a few paragraphs in response to the statement, on the attached sheet which you can either, email or post back to me? This will allow me to understand a bit more fully what some of the issues might be and to enable me to focus my research most appropriately.

I would then (and even if you do not have time to write the few paragraphs), like to come and have a structured 'conversation' with you some time over the next 6 or 7 months. It would be helpful if you could let me know when would be a good time for you.

If you are coming to General Synod in London in February I would be very happy to meet you there on either of the first two days (if you can carve out an hour or so), if that is helpful, or otherwise at another time and place to fit in with your schedule.

It is not my intention to use any of the material you write in response to this email in a way that would make it possible for you to be identified. If however, that were to change, at any stage, I would ensure I had your agreement before using any material.

Thank you for your patience in reading this letter. (You should have also received a copy by email a few days ago). I do hope very much that you will be willing to take part in this research but of course you are under no obligation to do so and are free to pull out at any time.

With best wishes

Some details about you

Initials:

Age (please tick one):	Under 40	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60+

Please give a very brief history of employment:

Date ordained priest:

Current post:

Length of time in current post:

Why did you apply for your current post?

Is it what you expected?

Is there anything else that you want to say about how you 'inhabit' your role as a senior women/ leader in the C of E?

Helps and Hindrances

In the **left hand column** below please make a list of the things that you can think of that: firstly, **help** you in your role, and secondly, **hinder** you in your role.

These can be single words or phrases – they are just ‘verbal labels’ that make sense for you. When you have done that, write in the **right hand column** what you think is the **opposite** word or phrase to the one you have in the left column.

HELPS	OPPOSITES
HINDRANCES	OPPOSITES

Elements and Triadic Elicitation

Elements

- E1 Me now as a leader
- E2 Me ideally as a leader
- E3 How I think my Bishop sees me as a leader
- E4 How I think clergy/ staff/ chapter in the diocese/college/cathedral see me as a leader
- E5 How I think a man in the same job as me would be seen as a leader
- E6 How I think the C of E sees me as a leader
- E7 How I would like to be seen by the C of E as a leader
- E8 Me as a leader in 5 years time
- E9 A woman leader from the Bible that I identify with
- E10 How I think lay people see me as a leader

Triads for Construct Elicitation

- 1, 5, 6 - Me now, man in same job, C of E now
- 3, 4, 9 – Bishop now, clergy now, bible woman
- 2, 7, 8 – Me ideal, like C of E, 5 yrs time
- 1, 2, 3 – me now, ideal, Bishop now
- 4, 5, 7 – clergy now, man, like C of E
- 6, 8, 9 – C of E now, 5 yrs time, biblical woman
- 1, 7, 9 – Me now, like C of E, bible woman
- 2, 4, 5 – Me ideally, clergy now, man
- 3, 6, 8 – Bishop, C of E now, 5 yrs time

Blank Grid with Elements

M E	1	Me now as a leader	Me ideally as a leader	How my Bishop sees me as a leader	How clergy in the Dio- cese see me as a leader	Man in the same job as me would be seen as a leader	How C of E sees me as a leader	Like to be seen by C of E as a leader	Me as a leader in 5yrs time	A leader from Bible / Christn Trad.	How lay people see me as a leader	7	C of E
	One pole of construct written here											Opposite pole of construct written here	

(Grid shown here is about half the width of the grid the women were asked to complete in the interview).

Appendix D

KEREN'S RESULTS WITH FULL GRID SUITE ANALYSIS

Keren's Results

Grid Suite Analysis and Constructs

Keren's constructs:

- C1 Seen as embracing whole scope of role v Only doing 'church' stuff
- C2 Gifts not valued v Being recognised (enabled) as a leader
- C3 Tying 'body' down v Able to free 'body to be body'
- C4 Freedom to inhabit the role as a woman v Living with the assumptions of others
- C5 Disconnected from community v Being rooted in community
- C6 Focus on 'radical nature of tradition' v Focus on 'fixed' nature of tradition
- C7 Able to be seen as 'me' in role v Preconceptions made about 'me' in role
- C8 Forgetting roots v Leadership rooted in faith
- C9 Holding boundaries (leads to freedom) v Dysfunctional/ inward looking

This grid contains the ratings for each of the constructs given by Keren. The ratings are the numbers from 1 to 7. The construct poles are deliberately mixed up, so that not all the 'negative' ends of the construct are on the same side. So for example, if we look at the 4th and 5th constructs here we have:

Freedom to inhabit role as a women v Living with assumptions.

For this construct the 'positive end' is a 1 and the 'negative end' is a 7. However, for the construct, *Disconnected from community v Rooted in community*, the 'positive end' is a 7 and the 'negative end' a 1.

By mixing them up like this people have to think much more carefully about the values that they are attaching to each element in relation to a particular construct.

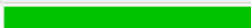





	1	Me now as L	Me ideally as L	Bishop sees me as L	Clergy see me as L	Man in same job seen as L	CofE sees me as L	Like to be seen by CofE	Me as L in 5yrs	L from Christian Trad	Lay people see me as L	7
Whole scope of role		2	1	2	2	4	4	5	1	2	2	Only 'church' stuff
Gifts not valued		5	7	6	6	7	5	6	7	6	6	Enabled as a leader
Tying 'body' down		5	7	6	6	3	3	3	7	6	7	Freeing 'body' to be 'body'
Freedom to inhabit role as women		3	1	2	3	4	6	6	1	1	6	Living with assumptions of others
Disconnected from community		6	7	6	5	5	4	6	7	7	5	Rooted in community
Focus on radical nature of tradition		2	1	4	4	6	5	2	1	1	5	Focus on fixed nature of tradition
Able to be seen as 'me' in role		3	1	2	3	1	6	1	1	1	5	Preconceptions made about 'me' i...
Forgetting roots		6	7	6	6	4	5	7	7	7	6	Leadership rooted in faith
Holding boundaries leads to freedom		2	1	2	2	4	2	1	1	1	2	Dysfunctional/ Inward looking

In most cases, the 'ideal' element(s) will contain only 1's and 7's - that is, the extremes of each construct. This is the case here with *Me ideally as a Leader*. What is interesting here is that the element *Me as a leader in 5 years time*, also contains only 1's and 7's which suggests that in 5 years time Keren hopes that she will be the leader that she

ideally would like to be! This is certainly a very hopeful aim although how realistic it is we have yet to see.

Eigenvalues

This chart shows how much of the 'meaning' of the grid is taken up by particular components. This helps identify key issues/ themes/ ideas.

PC	Eigenvalue	% Variance	Cumulative...	Scree
1	3.95	43.89	43.89	
2	3.18	35.35	79.24	
3	1.43	15.86	95.10	
4	0.19	2.09	97.20	
5	0.15	1.69	98.89	
6	0.07	0.79	99.67	
7	0.03	0.30	99.97	
8	0.00	0.02	100.00	
9	0.00	0.00	100.00	

These themes can be identified more clearly on the grid plot by looking at the clusters around each component.

The Eigenvalue table provides the percentage value attached to each component. Typically, three components will account for 90 to 95% of the 'meaning' of the grid. What is interesting here is that 79% of the meaning in the grid comes from components 1 (44%) and 2 (35%) with only 15% coming from component 3. So for Keren it is components 1 and 2 that are really important.

We will now look in more detail at the grid plots (Principal Component Analysis - PCA) to identify what these key components might be.

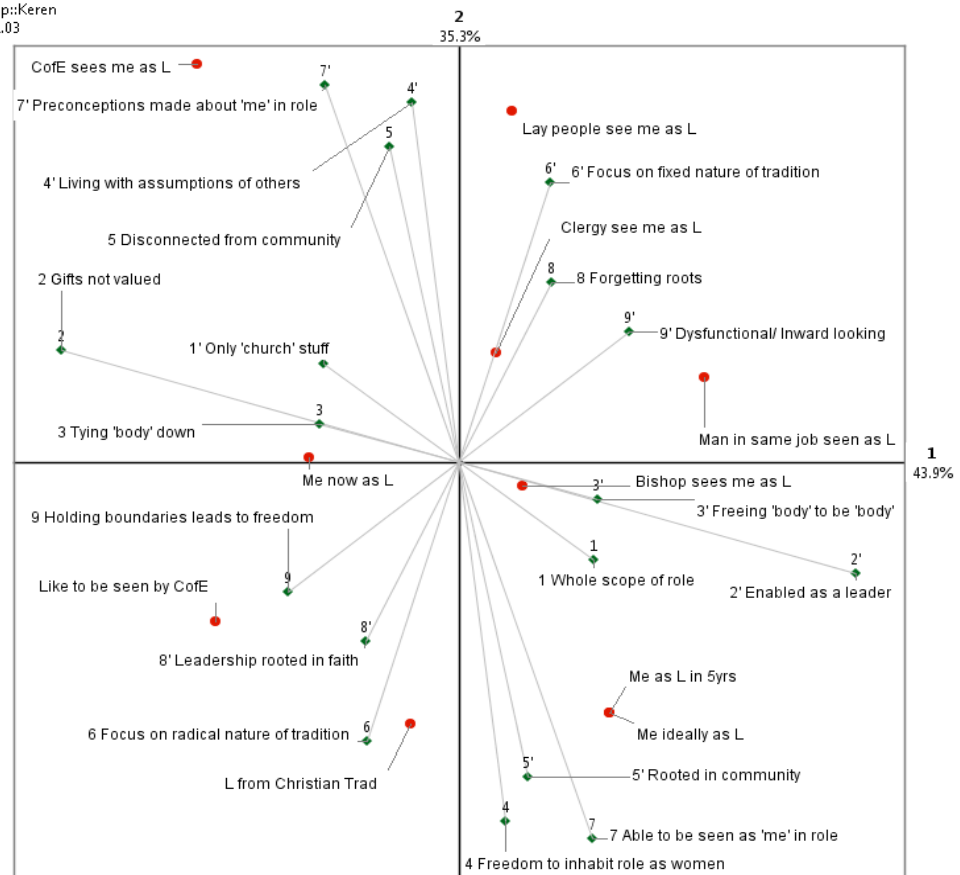
There are a number of things to look for in the grid plots. Some examples are:

- Identify which constructs are related to components.
- Constructs that are not really working tend to have short lines; those with most meaning for the person have longer lines.
- It can be interesting to look at Me now/ Me ideally and see what the differences are.
- Elements that are furthest away from the origin are the most clear.
- The particular quadrant that an element appears in is significant and it is useful to identify which constructs are around which elements.
- Look for those things that are not seen clearly and things that are out on their own.
- Identify what is on the 'negative' side.

Principal Component Analysis: Components 1 and 2

Component 1 (44%)

PCA (Varimax) Leadership::Keren
Range of axes: -1.03 to +1.03



The most important constructs here are (in order of value):

2- *Enabled as a leader v Gifts not valued*

3 - *Freeing the 'body' to be the 'body' v Tying the 'body' down*

1 - *Whole scope of role v Doing 'only' church stuff*

Construct 2 is clearly the key one here (it has the longest line and therefore has the most meaning for Keren in this grid). Constructs 1 and 3 don't really work at all in this grid plot (they have short lines) and although they might help us identify key themes they obviously do not work as well here as construct number 2 clearly does.

The constructs clustering around this component seem to be about '**Enabled as a leader because my gifts are valued**'. The freedom to use one's gifts and for them to be recognised enables Keren to exercise her authority and helps her to feel that her role as a leader has been discerned by others and that this is who she is (this supports her sense of vocation and rightness of her current role). This also 'frees' her to have a broader sense of what her role as a leader might mean and she clearly sees this as being more than just doing 'church' stuff, so as well as freeing other people in the church to do things, her leadership role is also 'lived out' within the wider community.

Component 2 (35%)

There are three constructs that cluster around this component, all of which are quite meaningful for Keren. These are:

4 Freedom to inhabit the role as a woman v Living with assumptions of others

5 Rooted in community v Disconnected from community

7 Able to be seen as 'me' in role v Preconceptions made about 'me' in role

To a lesser extent (and slightly less meaningful for Keren), construct 6 *Focus on the radical nature of tradition v Focus on the fixed nature of tradition*, is also impacting on the meaning of this component.

These constructs seem to suggest that, in her role as a leader, this component is something about **'Being able to be 'me' (as a women) in community'**. Construct 6 is also significant here, and it seems that this component is more outward focused, highlighting Keren's belief that although tradition is important, the church needs to use this tradition to focus on the community around it in more radical (and maybe different ways). One of the different ways it may need to do this is to allow her (and others) to 'be themselves' in their leadership roles as women. It is perhaps a re-envisioning of what 'church' might mean but without denying the importance of tradition and the past. Being rooted in community is particularly significant for Keren and perhaps has a more particular meaning for her because of the fact that Keren lives and works on a large island. The 'community' involves Keren dealing with all aspects of what community might involve, including civic, political and many other forms of secular leadership. In this respect, her role is akin to the role of a suffragan bishop. Keren's community is on one hand very broad (in terms of who is included in it) and on the other very discrete (and separate from the mainland by a stretch of water). Community is consequently more defined, more encompassing and Keren has no option but to engage with it; at times it must be difficult to be able to observe any 'critical distance' in response to particular issues.

Being 'rooted in community' is thus very important to Keren and her current position cannot be very easy for her, as some of the 'community' does not seem to share her aspirations. Her perception is that, the Church of England, other clergy and lay people, are all on the 'negative' ends of the constructs (top half of the grid plot) that make up this component; however where she wants to be ideally (in 5 years' time) is the complete antithesis of this. She feels that the bishop however, is beginning to move towards her understanding although at present he is somewhat neutral in all this and, as we shall see she is not very clear about what he really thinks.

How the Elements are seen

If we look now at which elements are furthest away from the origin (as the crow flies), this shows us which of the elements are most clear for Keren. In the grid it appears that, Keren is very clear how lay people and the C of E generally see her as a leader. She is also clear how she would like to be seen, how a leader from Christian tradition (for her Trevor Huddleston), and a man in a similar job as her is seen as a leader. However, she is rather less clear how she is currently seen as a leader by other clergy and by the Bishop and consequently what implications this has for her as a leader now. This is particularly significant for Keren because as we shall see from the Interview Information, Keren relies on the authority delegated to her by the Bishop in particular (although to some extent other clergy too), for her mandate and her understanding of

herself as a leader. This lack of clarity around how the Bishop sees her as a leader must cause some stress and anxiety for her in her role and would explain why she is also rather unclear about herself as a leader now. What the Bishop thinks is very important to her and yet she is not that clear what he thinks!

Relation of Elements and Constructs

Another useful thing to look at is to see which elements are in which quadrant and which constructs these elements most closely relate to. In the above grid plot, we can observe a number of things:

Keren is quite clear about how the Church of England sees her as a leader at present and their view of her involves preconceptions being made about her in her role, being disconnected from community and having to live with the assumptions of others. She would like the Church of England to see her as a leader who is rooted in faith, holding boundaries but with an outward focus and rediscovering the radical nature of tradition, as exemplified by a 'leader from Christian Tradition'. The leader from Christian Tradition that Keren identified was Trevor Huddleston who she described as someone from the Anglo Catholic tradition who emphasised social justice.

In her view, a 'man in the same job as her' is a bit out on its own. Therefore, perhaps she does not compare herself too significantly with a man in the same role, although there is a bit of a feeling that a man would be more inward looking and although would have clear boundaries would also be much more tied down to tradition in a way that does not lead to freedom. Keren believes that both clergy and lay people currently see her as a leader who focuses on the fixed nature of tradition. In addition, she thinks she is also seen as someone who might be forgetting their roots rather than someone whose leadership is rooted in faith. She will have to grapple with this issue as she moves to where she would like to be as a leader.

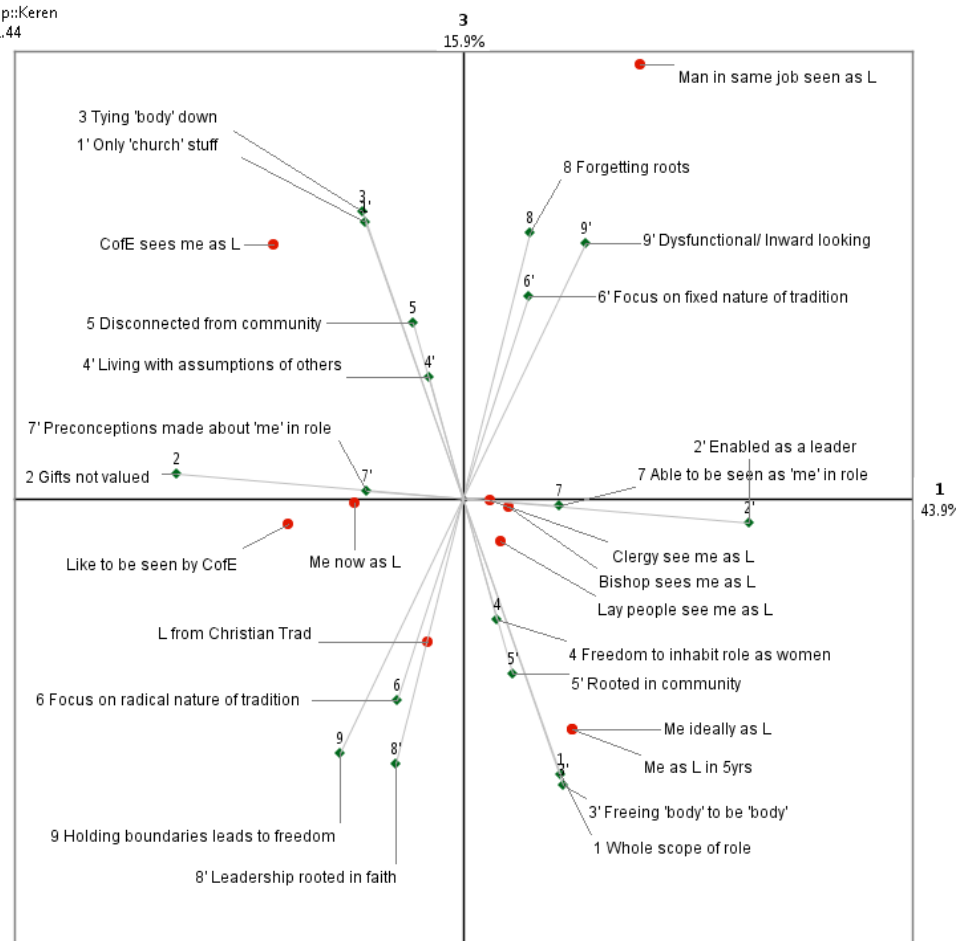
Where she would like to be ideally (and hopefully for her in about 5 years' time), is almost the complete opposite of how she thinks the Church of England currently sees her; that is, as a leader rooted in community and really able to be herself, inhabiting her role as a woman. She tentatively feels that how the Bishop views her is beginning to allow this to happen by being enabled as a leader and thus, "freeing the body to be the body". However, there is some way to go as she still feels that her gifts are not valued and as a result, the 'body' (the church) is still not being free to be what it can be.

Keren now and Keren ideally

Keren is quite clear how she ideally wants to be a leader - she wants her gifts to be valued in a way that enables her to be rooted in community with the freedom to inhabit the role as 'herself', as a woman. At present she is not clear, about how she is as a leader except that she perhaps feels a bit 'tied down' in doing church stuff and that her gifts are not yet being really valued. So one of the challenges is how she can enable others (as well as the Bishop, who is already beginning to 'get it'), to see and value her gifts in a way that allows them to see that her leadership is rooted in faith and focuses on the radical nature of tradition. For now, she may have to live with the assumptions and preconceptions of others but she knows that one way to achieve this is to be well rooted in community even if she perceives that some parts of that community do not yet really understand.

Principal Component Analysis: Components 1 and 3

PCA (Varimax) Leadership::Keren
Range of axes: -1.44 to +1.44



Component 1 (44%)

Once again, the constructs that cluster around component 1 are to do with 'being enabled as a leader', which involves one's gifts being recognised and valued. To a lesser extent but also important, it includes the freedom to really be 'oneself' in the role without too many preconceptions being made about how the role should be exercised.

Component 3 (16%)

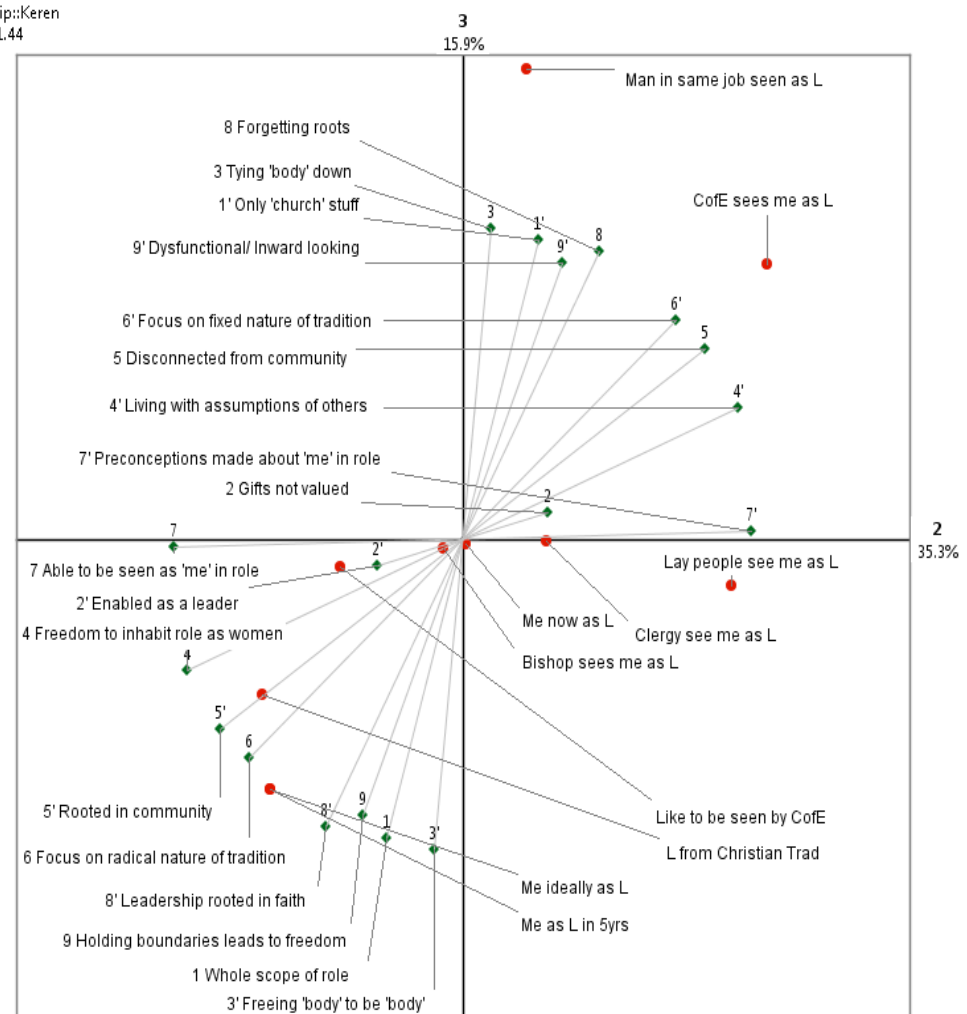
This component accounts for only 16% of the 'grid's meaning', in addition, however, a number of constructs that cluster around it. Mostly these seem to be to do with **the relation to the church as an organisation**. This component raises questions like: Is the church inward or outward focused? Is 'only' church stuff important, or is Keren as a church leader, able to attend to, and be valued for encompassing a broader view of what being church might involve? Are the people that make up the church (the body) free to live out what it means to be the Body of Christ or are they tied down to a more traditional and inward looking view of what church could be? Does being a leader in the church mean being rooted in faith, holding boundaries in a way that leads to freedom (people looking outward) and with an emphasis on the radical nature of tradition or does it involve being disconnected from community, inwardly focused and with an assumption that tradition is fixed, unchanging and therefore somewhat dysfunctional?

Keren is clear about how she would ideally hope to be seen as a leader, as someone who frees the 'body' to be the body and encompasses a broad understanding of the scope of her leadership role. She is also clear about how the Church of England currently sees her in her role as church leader, as someone who does "only church stuff", who lives with the assumptions of others and thus is not able to free the 'body' to be the body. A man in the same job as her is seen as being inward focused and concentrating on a fixed and traditional understanding of church.

There is a noticeable lack of clarity around how she currently sees herself as a leader and how she views the Bishop, clergy and lay people see her as leader. Interestingly, Keren seems to have rather mixed feelings about how she would like to be seen by the church. Perhaps this is because she wants to reclaim a radical view of tradition (whilst still valuing tradition and historic roots as important) and is therefore not quite sure how to do this. On one hand, she wants to challenge assumptions and maybe stir things up somewhat but on the other, she wants to be, "rooted in community and free the church to be the church". Sometimes these two things may seem to be rather incompatible and it can be difficult to hold onto both at the same time, and so consequently this results in some ambivalence about how exactly she would like the church (at a national, rather than local level) to view her.

Principal Component Analysis: Components 2 and 3

PCA (Varimax) Leadership::Keren
Range of axes: -1.44 to +1.44



Component 2 (35%)

The significant construct here is number 7 that is, *Able to be 'me' in role v Preconceptions made about 'me' in role*. The other construct that is important (although less meaningful) here is number 2 which emphasises the importance for Keren in having her gifts valued in order for her to exercise her leadership role. The relationship of some of the elements to this component is quite striking. Keren is clear that she would like to be seen by the Church of England as someone whose gifts are valued and who is thus free to inhabit her role as 'herself', that is, as a women who is really enabled to make the role what she wishes. Her Bishop is just beginning to move towards this position. She though views herself currently as a leader almost exactly in the middle between how she would like the Church of England to see her and how they see her as a leader now (living with assumptions of others, focused on a fixed nature of tradition, doing only church stuff, forgetting roots and disconnected from community).

This must be rather difficult for her especially as her 'community' is a discrete community, one that she believes is vital to be 'rooted' in, and yet at present she is not sure how she thinks of herself as a leader.

Keren is also clear about how lay people (and to a lesser extent, other clergy), see her as a leader which is relies on preconceptions being made about her in her role and a lack of valuing of her gifts.

Component 3 (16%)

How other people see her as a leader is a long way from how she would like to be seen as a leader that is partly about being rooted in her community and focusing on the radical nature of tradition but also about a number of things to do with the church as an organisation again. For example, exercising a leadership that is rooted in faith, being able to free the 'body' to be the Body of Christ and encompassing a broad understanding of what church leadership might be in her particular context.

The fact that Keren hopes to be seen as a very different kind of leader from how she is seen now says a lot about her enthusiasm, energy and determination to shape the role so that she and others can be free to be the people God wants them to be. It also highlights how precarious and somewhat daunting her task is. Another significant factor is clearly how the bishop views her as out of everyone (Church of England, clergy and lay people), she believes that he is beginning to see her as the sort of leader she would like to be.

Standardised Component Scores

These show the 'loading' of the elements on the components. That is, how each of the elements (for example, 'me as a leader now'), relates to the three key identified themes. It identifies which elements are closely related to the meaning of the components.

	PC 1	PC 2	PC 3
Me now a...	-0.89	-0.07	-0.00
Me ideally...	0.78	-0.68	-0.95
Bishop se...	0.36	-0.06	-0.02
Clergy see...	0.31	0.60	-0.20
Man in sa...	1.41	-0.36	2.35
CofE sees ...	-1.34	1.31	0.86
Like to be ...	-1.56	-0.94	0.17
Me as L in...	0.78	-0.68	-0.95
L from Ch...	-0.45	-1.07	-0.38
Lay peopl...	0.59	1.95	-0.86

Principal Component 1: Enabled as a leader because my gifts are valued

There are four elements, which appear to be loaded on this component:

Me now as a leader

How the Church of England sees me now

How I would like to be seen as a leader

How a man in the same job as me would be seen as a leader.

Of these four elements, only the last one is positively loaded, that is, Keren perceives that the gifts of a man in the same leadership position as her would be valued whereas she feels that her gifts are not (yet?) valued or recognised although clearly she would like them to be. If her gifts continue not to be appreciated by the wider church community (particularly by the Church of England as a body) the extent to which she is enabled to be an effective leader might well be curtailed.

Principal Component 2: Being able to be 'me' (as a woman) in community

There are again four elements, which cluster around this component, these are:

How the Church of England sees me now

How lay people see me as a leader

How I would like to be seen as a leader

Leader from Christian tradition (for example, Trevor Huddleston, Anglo Catholic who emphasised social justice, 'the inner city Jesus').

Being able to be herself and rooted in community is how Keren would like herself to be seen and how she perceives someone like Trevor Huddleston would be seen. In contrast she believes the Church of England sees her as someone who is somewhat disconnected from community and who focuses on the fixed nature of tradition. Lay people have preconceptions about her in her leadership role but it appears that although Keren recognises that she is having to live with the assumptions of others, perhaps those ministerially closest to her (other clergy and the Bishop) think a bit more like her. Maybe if she feels she has their support that will encourage her to keep working towards the kind of leader she would like to be. How she thinks the Church of England views her looks like it is much less important to her than those in her 'community' (lay and ordained).

Principal Component 3: Relationship to the church as an organisation

The elements that are loaded on this component are:

Me ideally/ 5 years' time as a leader

How lay people see me as a leader

How the Church of England sees me as a leader

How a man in the same job as me would be seen as a leader

It appears here that a man in a similar job (and to a much lesser extent) how the Church of England sees Keren as a leader is perceived by her to be about being inward looking, doing only church stuff, being inward looking and therefore 'tying the body down'. In contrast her ideal is to be seen as a leader rooted in faith and focused on the radical nature of tradition, and perhaps rather surprisingly it seems to suggest that Keren perceives that lay people share this view to some extent too.

Structure Coefficients

This serves a similar function to the previous table but this time for the constructs. That is, these show the loadings of the constructs on the components.

	PC 1	PC 2	PC 3
Whole sco...	0.31	-0.24	-0.89
Gifts not v...	-0.92	0.28	0.08
Tying 'bo...	-0.32	0.09	0.92
Freedom t...	0.11	-0.89	-0.39
Disconnec...	-0.16	0.78	0.57
Focus on r...	-0.21	-0.69	-0.65
Able to be...	0.31	-0.93	-0.02
Forgetting...	0.22	0.44	0.85
Holding b...	-0.40	-0.32	-0.82

Principal Component 1: Enabled as a leader because my gifts are valued

The only significant construct here is: *Enabled as a leader v Gifts not valued*. This is clearly a hugely significant construct/ component for Keren and it takes up 44% of the total meaning of her grid. How and to what extent her gifts and recognised and then seen as valuable is crucial to her understanding of how she inhabits her role as a senior leader within the church.

From the previous discussion about Standardised Component Scores it shows that whereas Keren is quite certain that a man in a similar role to her would have his gifts valued, she is not at all sure this is the case when it comes to herself. This is significant because Keren believed it was the skills one brought to the role were more crucial than gender. Yet here the fact that she is a woman means that Keren is very unsure about whether her gifts are valued, despite this being significant for her in her leadership role.

What we say with our heads and think with our hearts can be different things. Maybe gender should not be important but clearly here, it seems to be.

Principal Component 2: Being able to be 'me' (as a women) in community

There are two constructs here, which are significant for this particular component. These focus on the extent to which she is free to inhabit her leadership role as a woman. This is again significant given the nature of Keren's 'community'. The more distance there is between her 'in role' and her 'as a person' the more stressful she will find her job. Obviously, there needs to be a balance as over identification between role and person can lead to a blurring of boundaries and a tendency to overwork etc. It will be especially important for Keren, given her particular context, to be aware of this issue and to work out ways of managing this potential gap between role and person if she is to thrive rather than just survive in her leadership role.

Principal Component 3: Relationship to the church as an organisation

This component only accounts for 16% of the meaning of Keren's grid. However, the four constructs that relate to this particular component are to do with the importance of being rooted in faith, holding boundaries in a way that lets the people in the church

be the Body of Christ and encompassing all this in a way that lets Keren exercise the broad scope of her role. All this seems to point to the church, in this particular context, becoming an engaged and significant part of the wider community.

Correlation Matrix

This identifies which constructs are related (correlated) to each other, where there is, for example, some overlap in meaning.

	Whole sco...	Gifts not va...	Tying 'bod...	Freedom to...	Disconnect...	Focus on ra...	Able to be ...	Forgetting ...	Holding bo...
Whole sco...	1.00	-0.39	-0.94	0.62	-0.75	0.70	0.33	-0.77	0.64
Gifts not v...	-0.39	1.00	0.36	-0.36	0.40	-0.07	-0.52	-0.00	0.15
Tying 'bo...	-0.94	0.36	1.00	-0.48	0.64	-0.56	-0.24	0.78	-0.64
Freedom t...	0.62	-0.36	-0.48	1.00	-0.91	0.82	0.87	-0.70	0.56
Disconnec...	-0.75	0.40	0.64	-0.91	1.00	-0.89	-0.77	0.78	-0.63
Focus on r...	0.70	-0.07	-0.56	0.82	-0.89	1.00	0.56	-0.88	0.83
Able to be...	0.33	-0.52	-0.24	0.87	-0.77	0.56	1.00	-0.39	0.18
Forgetting...	-0.77	-0.00	0.78	-0.70	0.78	-0.88	-0.39	1.00	-0.95
Holding b...	0.64	0.15	-0.64	0.56	-0.63	0.83	0.18	-0.95	1.00

As we have seen previously the construct *Enabled to be a leader v Gifts not valued*, is really out on its own. It is, as a single construct, very important and holds a lot of meaning for Keren.

There are a few other notable groups of correlated constructs:

Embracing the whole scope of the role involves freeing the body be the body, being rooted in community and a focus on the radical nature of tradition.

Able to be seen as 'me' in role (rather than having preconceptions about 'me' in role) is connected with being rooted in community and having the freedom to inhabit the role as a woman.

Focus on the radical nature of tradition correlates with freedom to inhabit the role as a woman, embracing the whole scope of the role, being rooted in community and with a leadership grounded in faith.

Interview Information

Role and leadership

When Keren talks about 'role' she is referring to herself, as a leader, doing her particular job. For Keren, her location profoundly affects the context in which she exercises her leadership and thus helps to define her role. Leadership has to be "very much rooted in context and in community". Leadership comes with the role, and it is the "whole scope of what the role is", which needs to be embraced. It is the role, not the gender, which defines leadership.

The church makes assumptions about the role, which are irrespective of gender, so the role goes to the "best person for the job". "Others" (not in the church hierarchy) assume that the authority as a leader comes from being given the role.

Keren has been recognised as a leader from an early stage of her working in the church and has consequently been given responsibility, which has allowed her to develop her gifts and know that her gifts are valued.

Keren as a leader

Leadership needs to be rooted in faith ("ultimately we are called to be Holy and follow Christ.") Spirituality is an important part of leadership for Keren and those around her.

Although softly spoken, Keren is "steely" and not afraid to confront, she listens but is "robust". Although she believes gender is not important ... she thinks she leads differently from men and "inhabits" her role in a different way - she leads "alongside as well as in front", "challenge goes alongside support". Women "do faith, encouraging, enabling, differently (from men) but you can't always put your finger on it. Women give away authority and are maybe more relational". Although it is important to "hold boundaries", you need to give others "responsibility and the freedom to exercise power".

Keren really wants to be "seen as me" in her role as a leader and not to be constrained by the preconceptions or assumptions of others.

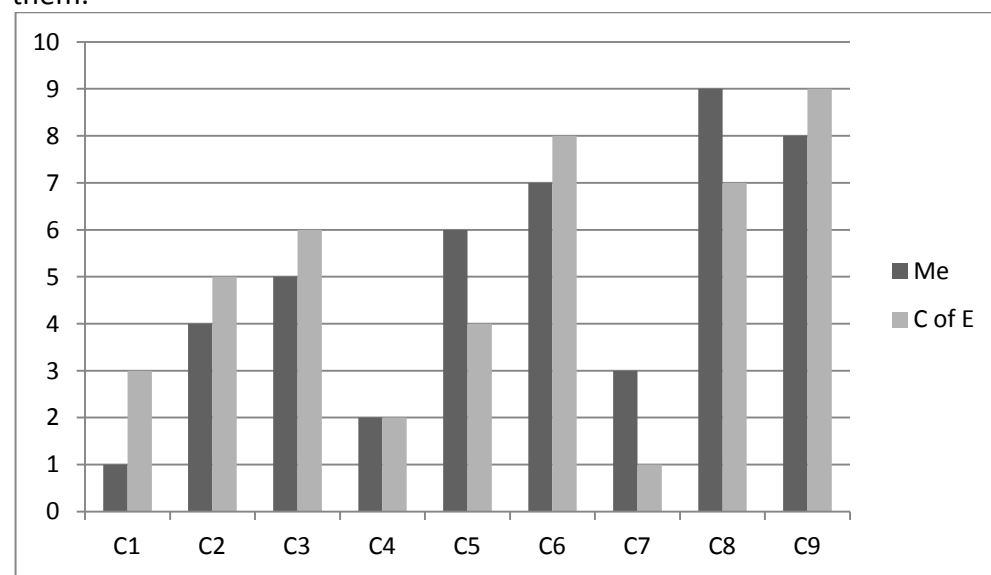
The church and leadership

Spiritual discipline is important and is a necessary part of being a leader. It also makes structures/ boundaries "less hidden and more explicit". As a result people can see that "due process" leads to fairness and thus "frees the body to be the body", working together. "The right structures free the church for mission".

Leadership is exercised under the authority of the diocesan bishop. Authority and identity (as a leader) comes from church tradition, which gives the "freedom to inhabit a senior role without apology". There is a need to keep church tradition/ roots in focus but tradition should be viewed in a "radical rather than fixed way - the gospel is subversive, fights injustice".

Rankings

This Bar Chart shows how Keren ranked her nine constructs. She did this twice, firstly putting the constructs in order from the most important to the least important for her; secondly, ranking them in the order that she thought the Church of England would put them.



(1 is the least important - 9 is the most important)

How Keren ranks the constructs for herself

The three highest ranked constructs are (1st, 2nd, 3rd):

C8 Leadership that is rooted in faith (prayer and sacrament)

C9 Holding boundaries in a way that leads to freedom (v inward focused)

C6 Focus on the 'radical' nature of tradition (v 'fixed' nature)

The three lowest ranked constructs are (7th, 8th, 9th):

C7 Able to be 'me' in role

C4 Freedom to inhabit role as a woman

C1 Embracing whole scope of role (v only doing church stuff)

How Keren ranks the constructs for the Church of England

The three highest ranked constructs are (1st, 2nd, 3rd):

C9 Holding boundaries in a way that leads to freedom (v inward focused)

C6 Focus on the 'radical' nature of tradition (v 'fixed' nature)

C8 Leadership that is rooted in faith (prayer and sacrament)

The three lowest ranked constructs are (7th, 8th, 9th):

C1 Embracing whole scope of role

C4 Freedom to inhabit role as a woman

C7 Able to be 'me' in role

There are a couple of observations worth making here.

Firstly, that the three highest and three lowest constructs ranked by Keren for herself are the same three highest and lowest as she ranks for the Church of England, albeit in a slightly different order. In both cases the highest three seem to be about the 'role' of leadership and how this is exercised within the institution whilst the lowest three constructs appear to focus more on 'the person' in the leadership role. Perhaps if Keren's perception of what was important was too far apart from what she thinks is important for the church this would be too hard for her to live with and her role even more difficult than it is?

The second observation particularly concerns constructs number 4 and number 1. In the MFS, we have also seen that although being 'women', in their roles, was clearly very significant for the women incumbents, they also ranked it as one of the least important constructs for both themselves and for the Church of England. One can only speculate what impact this 'dissonance' between what they feel *is* really important for them as 'women' in these leadership roles and what they think *should be* important for them, and *is* important for the church, is having on them as people and as senior church leaders.

Surely, this must have some part to play in the question of why not more women are prepared to apply for senior posts in the Church of England?

Self Characterisation

This is what Keren wrote:

Keren is... *someone who listens, relates well to a wide range of people, is tougher than she looks, well respected, not afraid to confront those issues previously put in the "too difficult to handle pile". Keren is a woman who, "does God well", can think strategically; speaking of God and vision means she will be perceived as a challenge or threat by some. Keren is comfortable with the breadth of Anglican church style, "an evangelical trying to get out" with commitment to the sacraments of historic catholic spiritualities.*

Keren commented that completing the Self Characterisation made her feel uncomfortable but that it had made her reflect on her leadership and on feedback she had received from others. Interestingly all the statements are positive (it reads almost like the synopsis of a CV) and this is perhaps partly why it felt uncomfortable to write. Whilst we may hope that, those in a leadership position would be 'secure in themselves' and self aware, committing that to paper for someone else to read can be difficult (and maybe culturally more difficult for women and/or in the church where humility is often mistaken for self effacement?)

As these Self Characterisations are so brief, they have been analysed by 'unpicking' the text in an attempt to place each part of it in one of the three categories outlined by Feixas and Villegas (1991), and then to use these 'bits' to identify a number of elements and constructs.

In brief the three categories are:

1. Evaluative-simple. In our context, this is where Keren attributes a personal characteristic to herself. For example, *Keren is someone who listens*.
2. Meta evaluative. This involves a perception of the use of a construct. For example, *Keren will be perceived as a challenge or threat by some*.
3. Relational. Here this might mean what Keren understands of the relationships or connections between people. For example, *Keren is comfortable with the breadth of Anglican church style*.

Here are some possibilities for the text's analysis:

Keren is someone who listens (1)

Element - Keren

Construct - Listens

relates well to a wide range of people (3)

Elements - Wide range of people (Could include bishops, clergy, lay people in church, others outside the church with whom she has contact)

Constructs - Relationships/ relates well, competence

is tougher than she looks (2)

Elements - Keren, others

Constructs - Tough, perceived to be (by others)

well respected (2)

Elements - Keren

Constructs - Respect, Competence, Gifts

not afraid to confront those issues... in the "too difficult to handle pile" (3)

Elements - Keren, others (past and present)

Constructs - Unafraid, confront, perceived to be, difficult situations

Keren is a woman who, "does God well" (3)

Elements - Keren, God

Constructs - Competence, skills, gifts

can think strategically (1)

Element - Keren

Construct - think strategically

speaking of God and vision means she will be perceived as a challenge or threat by some (2)

Elements - Keren, others

Constructs - speaking of God, threat, vision

Keren is comfortable with the breadth of Anglican church style (3)

Elements - Keren, Anglican church style

Constructs - Comfortable, breadth

"an evangelical trying to get out" with commitment to the sacraments of historic catholic spiritualities (3)

Elements - Keren, Evangelical, Catholic

Constructs - freedom, commitment, historic spiritualities

Keren's Self Characterisation roughly splits into three sections covering how she relates as a leader, how she thinks and talks about God as a leader, and how she engages with the church as a leader. Her text contains statements at each of the three levels suggested by Feixas and Villegas (1991) but for our purposes, it is enough to look at the constructs and elements in her text.

The constructs once again confirm some important themes for her: being able to speak of God, being respected because of her skills and gifts, being able to think strategically and develop vision, being willing to engage in and confront difficult situations. What people think about her is important and interestingly she begins her account with the words, "... is someone who listens", however, she is also aware that others make assumptions about her which are not always accurate and that she is tough/ enabled/ confident enough, in her leadership role to go against these expectations if necessary.

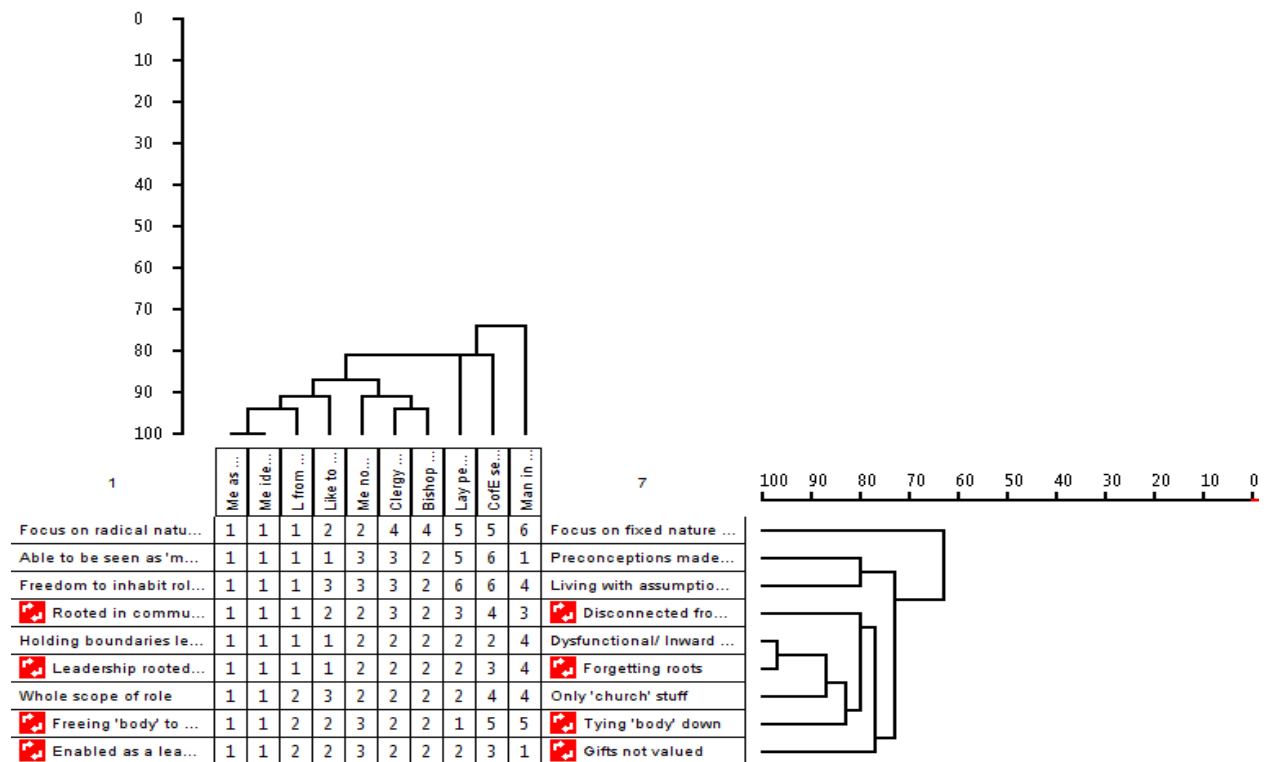
The elements show us that she exercises her leadership in a wide variety of contexts with a broad range of people - Evangelical to Catholic, lay person to bishop, church people to non church people - and that she is well able and happy doing this.

Dendrogram

The chart on the following page shows how particular constructs cluster together with other constructs (horizontal axis), and how (separately) elements cluster together with other elements (vertical axis). It shows which are most similar and which are most different from each other.

The two tables following the Dendrogram give this information in statistical form, firstly for the elements and secondly, for the constructs. A match of 100% means the two elements (or constructs) are synonymous with each other and that the person has

given them exactly the same ratings in the grid. In this example, this occurs with the elements, 'Me ideally as a leader' and 'Me as a leader in 5 years' time', so for Keren these two elements are synonymous.



Dendrogram Grid: Leadership - Client:Keren

Cluster Analysis: Elements

		matching
Me ideally as L	with Me as L in 5yrs	100.0%
Bishop sees me as L	with Clergy see me as L	94.0%
Me ideally as L	with L from Christian Trad	94.0%
Me now as L	with Clergy see me as L	91.0%
Like to be seen by CofE	with L from Christian Trad	91.0%
Me now as L	with Like to be seen by CofE	87.0%
Bishop sees me as L	with Lay people see me as L	81.0%
CofE sees me as L	with Lay people see me as L	81.0%
Man in same job seen as L	with CofE sees me as L	74.0%

Cluster Analysis: Constructs

		matching
Holding boundaries leads to freedom/Dysfunctional/ Inward looking	with Forgetting roots/Leadership rooted in faith	97.0%
Forgetting roots/Leadership rooted in faith	with Whole scope of role/Only 'church' stuff	87.0%
Tying 'body' down/Freeing 'body' to be 'body'	with Whole scope of role/Only 'church' stuff	83.0%
Freedom to inhabit role as women/Living with assumptions of others	with Able to be seen as 'me' in role/Preconceptions made about 'me' in role	80.0%
Holding boundaries leads to freedom/Dysfunctional/ Inward looking	with Disconnected from community/Rooted in community	80.0%
Gifts not valued/Enabled as a leader	with Tying 'body' down/Freeing 'body' to be 'body'	77.0%
Disconnected from community/Rooted in community	with Freedom to inhabit role as women/Living with assumptions of others	73.0%
Focus on radical nature of tradition/Focus on fixed nature of tradition	with Able to be seen as 'me' in role/Preconceptions made about 'me' in role	63.0%

Elements (vertical axis)

There seem to be three clusters of elements.

As we have seen earlier *Me ideally/ Me in 5 years' time* are synonymous with each other; the other element that is here as well is a *Leader from Christian Tradition* (as presumably such a person serves as a source of inspiration/ aspiration).

The second cluster seems to be *Me now as a leader/How clergy see me as a leader/ How the bishop sees me as a leader*. These elements all concern ordained colleagues. These two clusters are then somewhat separated from the third cluster: *How lay people see me as a leader/ How the Church of England sees me as a leader/ How a man in the same job as me would be seen as a leader*. This third cluster seems to concern those who are perhaps a bit further away from immediate day to day influence.

The element that is least connected to all the other elements is a *How a man in the same job as me is seen as a leader*.

Constructs (horizontal axis)

There are a number of small clusters here, which are subsumed into a couple of overarching cluster. An *Outward focus* and *Leadership rooted in faith* go together. These are then clustered with *Encompassing the whole scope of the role*, and these three in turn are included in *Freeing the body to be the body*. Finally, *Rooted in community* and *Enabled as a leader* bring this bigger cluster together.

The second, smaller cluster, and somewhat separate from this first group, is *Able to be 'me' as a leader* and *Freedom to inhabit the role as a woman*. This second cluster is more personal whereas the first cluster is more about how the leadership role is construed in the public sphere.

Interestingly, the construct that is least clustered with any of the other constructs is, *Focus on the radical nature of tradition v Fixed nature of tradition*. Given that the element that was furthest away from the others was about how a man in the same role would be seen as a leader, perhaps this represents an attempt to move to a different way of doing things, which is to do with gender, despite assertions by Keren that this is not the case?

Summary

- In 5 years' time Keren hopes that she will be the leader that she ideally would like to be.
- Keren believes that, "the right structures free the church for mission" and that authority and identity (as a leader) comes from church tradition (viewed in a "radical rather than fixed way") which gives the "freedom to inhabit a senior role without apology".
- Keren asks whether she will be able and be valued for encompassing a broader view of what being church might involve?
- Keren feels that she is encouraged as a leader because her gifts are valued and recognised - this enables her to exercise her authority and helps her to feel that, "her role as a leader has been discerned by others". This also "frees" her to have a broader sense of what her role as a leader might mean within the wider community.
- Keren is clear how lay people and the church see her as a leader; she is also clear (although has mixed feelings about), how she would like to be seen. However, she is rather less clear about how she is currently seen as a leader by other clergy and by the bishop.

- Keren believes it is the role, not the gender, which defines leadership. However, although Keren said several times that gender was not important... she believes that she "inhabits" her role in a different way from a man - she leads, "alongside as well as in front, challenge goes alongside support. Women 'do' faith, encouraging, enabling, differently (from men) but you cannot always put your finger on it. Women give away authority and are maybe more relational".
- Keren's challenge is how to enable others to recognise and value her gifts in a way that allows them to see her as a leader who is rooted in community, focused on the radical nature of tradition, and really able to be herself, inhabiting her role as a woman.